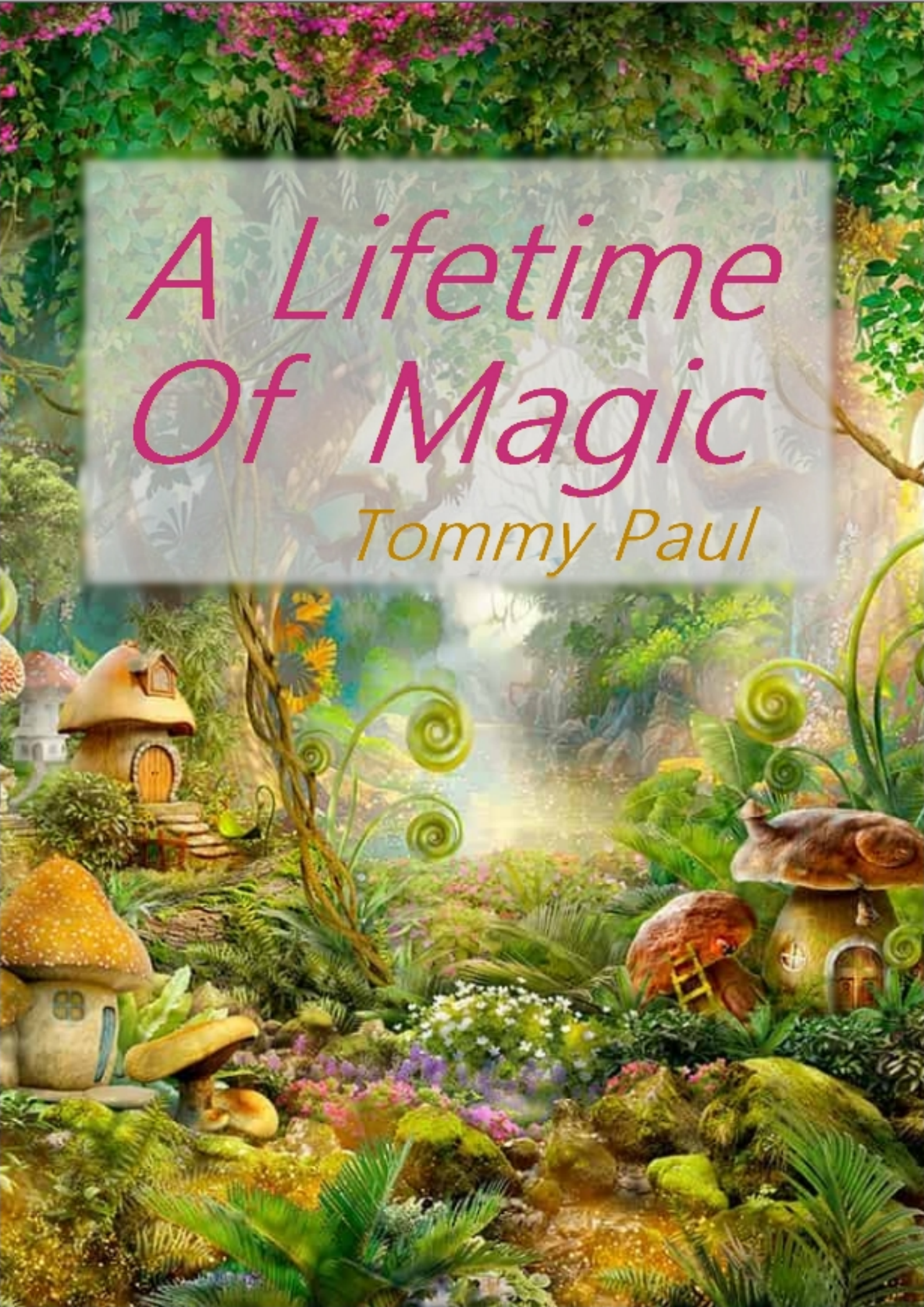
A Lifetime
Of Magic
Tommy Paul

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A LIFETIME OF MAGIC

by Tommy Paul
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72 years of paranormal experiences
proving life offers far more than most see.

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Chapter 1
IS MAGIC REAL?

*** WHAT I BELIEVE ***

Sitting in the last row of a college classroom as a visitor, I was appalled at hearing the professor pronounce to his first-year class of new psychology students, "Of course there is no such thing as mind reading." I was appalled because that kind of thinking is exactly what prevents most people from ever experiencing any form of magic or being able to recognize a magical experience when it happens. From birth to the grave, most of us are repeatedly given subtle (and often not-so-subtle) hints from one day to the next that magic is not real, does not exist, and is only a fantasy created for children's stories.

Once convinced magic isn't real, most people go their entire lives without ever changing their minds in spite of magic being alive and well, actively decorating the world around them as they travel through life. They can't recognize it, though, because by nature magic continuously gives everyone (including them) the reality each person most deeply believes in. So even when a part of what they believe requires magic to bring it to life in their own lived experience, they go through that experience without ever recognizing it as magic at all, believing it is just another part of the solid reality they already knew exists.

We're taught magic is not real by our parents, schools teachers, religious leaders, and even our friends who are likewise being indoctrinated. These endless little messages against seeing more deeply into our world build up in our subconscious over time and harden into powerful psychological blocks that prevent us from experiencing the reality of magic, even later in life. Even people who do eventually want to believe in and experience magic usually cannot due to these subconscious blocks planted so deeply and reinforced firmly in their minds.

*** THE DANGER OF BEING RELIGIOUS ***

An additional and still more serious problem stems from the danger of being religious without understanding the role magic plays in making religions spiritually

functional. Religions teach us that God is a being who inherently knows everything and thus knows what is best for each of us. Since He knows what is best, He has made a plan for each person to follow throughout their lives. In this plan, we are expected to humble ourselves, setting our personal desires and goals aside in order to follow His superior plan instead. To do otherwise would be a serious "sin," making God very unhappy with us.

So we eventually learn to accept the above, and yet what we believe to be God's plan for our lives comes from what we are told by everyone around us including movies we watch, from so many of the things we read be they ancient texts or online articles, and from every religion that tries to explain what God wants from us. And yet, none of these people, or their writings, or their religions are themselves God, nor are they you. And being separate from you, they can not actually know how God wants *you* to live *your* life.

To make matters even worse, we are taught that only God can perform miracles—the religious term for “magic.” Therefore man cannot do magic, because man is not God. With this logic, attempting to do magic is akin to trying to be on God's level instead of accepting His far superior position over us, which makes any attempt to do magic a serious blasphemy against God. Therefore, we must humbly accept that God alone is in control over what manifests in our lives and around us.

All of this leads to a deeply felt sense of unhappiness, because trying to follow what others say God wants for our lives can seriously conflict with what we instinctively know to be our truth deep within. This conflict creates feelings of helplessness, guilt, and weakness—feelings that magically pull undesired events into our lives to match them. These events in turn produce even more feelings of helplessness, guilt, and weakness, drawing in yet another set of unpleasant events as the natural result. We become caught in an expanding downward spiral of unwanted emotions and events reinforcing each other until they are hard to ever escape, ultimately leading to a dissatisfying, unfulfilled life.

This vicious cycle is what makes recognizing the freedoms and abilities God endowed within each of us so very important. There is the American expression "Buyer Beware," but the ancient Greeks put it more clearly when they engraved this directive over the doors of their temples: "Know Thyself."

The problems described above comprise the primary reason for writing this book. It is my effort to share my personal experiences of magic with anyone willing to listen in hopes of offsetting some of the damage done by disbelievers. I've included experiences of various types of magic taken from different traditions and

stages of my life, ranging from the time I was barely a toddler to after I became elderly. Contained in this book are some of my most significant experiences within Christianity, ancient Native American ways, parapsychology, dreams, ghosts, animals, trees, and of course the law of attraction, which works beautifully when properly practiced. What each of these examples have in common is being part of my own experience and totally real.

Chapter 2

EXPERIENCING CHRISTIANITY

*** THE PERFECT STORM ***

There was a major thunderstorm outside one day when I was just three years old. I started crying because the thunder was so loud and nearly constant, scaring me repeatedly. But my mother had the perfect answer. She knew to embrace what was happening, to not be afraid of or fight against it. Instead, she took me to the dining room window in the direction the storm was blowing from and opened the window all the way up. The wind and rain came pouring in as she placed her head in the window and called out, “Make the lightning flash bright, God!” The lightning flashed brightly. Then she shouted, “Now make the thunder boom and roar!” The thunder came immediately after her words—it boomed, then it roared. She kept this up for quite a while as we became increasingly soaked.

I believed God was there, right outside the window, listening to my mother's words and giving her exactly what she asked for every time. I was thrilled by this, no longer afraid at all. As I came closer and looked out into the warm summer wind and rain, it felt so good on my skin; it felt like God caressing me with His rain all over. We both loved it.

For this and so many other learning experiences, I give extreme thanks to my wonderful mother. She started teaching me about the reality of magic as soon as I could talk at age two. As a result, I had no need for "faith" to "overcome my unbelief," because being that young, I had no unbelief for faith to overcome. She devoted countless hours and precisely focused efforts—like during this storm—to showing me a deeper reality beyond what most people allow themselves to see or experience. She did so from the beginning, while my mind and heart were still pure, open, and able to accept the truth, allowing magic to work beautifully for me from the very beginning. And for years, she continued living it right there beside me, just like she did that day at the dining room window.

*** YOU ASK HIM TOO ***

Throughout my infancy, my mother would sit out on the porch in the evening,

rocking me to sleep while singing a song she created for me, a soft, gentle melody filled with magical words for my protection, growth, and future. I have no doubt her song did a lot to create the fact I've always been spiritually protected from any serious harm. To this day I remember its gentle melody, one that still makes me feel calm and ready for sleep each time I think of it. I've long forgotten her words, but perhaps that's to keep them deeply internalized, still doing their job, never to be brought out for intellectual dissection.

As soon as I began talking at age two, she began saying, "Ask God," any time I wanted to know something of merit, telling me to simply close my eyes and listen for His answer. I didn't hear a single answer during my second and third year, but I took her requests seriously since the process had always worked for her. She'd close her eyes and silently ask God a question and He'd give her an answer, which she'd then share with me. Soon, it became my habit to ask her to ask God things. She'd always say, "You ask Him, too," and so I would. Then I'd wait for her to open her eyes before asking her for His answer.

There are countless examples of this, but the one I remember best took place when I was age four. I wanted to see a cartoon we had on 8mm film, but I couldn't find it. Naturally, I asked Mother to ask God where it was and as usual, she replied, "You ask Him, too. You can do it." I did so and heard a whispery voice in my head say, "Upstairs some place." Was that God, or my imagination? I didn't know, so of course I asked her what He said as soon as she opened her eyes, hoping I'd really heard his message. "Upstairs some place," she answered.

WOW! I had finally heard Him! After two years of trying, I really did it!

After that, I started hearing God answer with increasing volume and frequency and He was always correct without exception, always helpful. For example, I'd be walking outside and He'd say, "Look over here." I'd look and, sure enough, there would be something beautiful to see, like a snail's trail glistening in the bright sunlight.

The time I heard His voice the loudest was a year later at age five. The sound was as clear as if someone was standing in the room near me. I was praying over and over again—silently, in my head—that I would not catch the mumps. My brother had caught the mumps and was sleeping in the bed right next to me. I was frightened because I knew catching mumps would mean getting penicillin shots from the doctor, and I was so very afraid of being poked with that scary needle going deep into my skin. So I kept silently praying the same prayer over and over again: "Please, God, don't let me catch the mumps!"

Finally, I heard His voice say gently, yet loud and clear, "Ok, Tommy. But it would be better if you had them * now." I declined the offer, "No. Not now. No, no, no.

* He said “them” in keeping with my belief that the word “mumps” is plural; with a mump on one cheek and another mump on the other cheek.

Please!" Then I felt free to stop praying and fell asleep, because God had answered me, and I knew He always kept His promises.

But for the next eight years, I wondered why He had added, "But it would be better if you had them now." Finally, eight years later, I found out. I caught the mumps from someone at school and because I was so much older, there were dangerous complications, mainly encephalitis (swelling of the brain), which came close to killing me. I'm so fortunate I still had the protection of my mother's prayers at that time, ensuring I remained under God's full protection and that no serious harm came from it. But clearly, God had been right; He had known exactly what would happen later when He warned me, “It would be better if you had them now.”

*** A SECRET WITH GOD ***

When I was three years old, I fell down on a rough cement sidewalk, resulting in a big bloody scratch on my knee. The next day, my mother and father took me to the lake, where he was working on his boat, and I had a large, thick scab of dried blood on the knee wound from the day before. My Band-Aid had not stayed on (it probably fell off while I was taking a bath), so my parents looked at the scab and then told me not to touch it or pick at it. But I couldn't resist! I kept picking at the edge when no one was looking until suddenly all but the bottom edge broke loose, revealing many blood-red and white spots covering the wet yellow skin underneath. I pushed the brown scab back into place to hide my crime and was relieved that because it was sticky, it stayed in place.

Not wanting to be caught or scolded for disobeying, I silently (but quite seriously) asked God to please make the scab and bloody injury underneath disappear.

Then I went on playing. But every few minutes, I would look down at that scab on my knee, and each time I looked it was noticeably smaller than before. Clearly, God was answering my prayer and making it disappear. Finally, it was only a brown dot, and the next time I looked, it was totally gone!

Normally, my skin would be pink for a day or two where a bloody cut or scratch like that had recently healed. But this time, there was no discoloration at all—no scab, no scar, and no hint that any injury had ever been there whatsoever. It was now just perfectly healthy baby skin again.

I wanted to know how long God had spent healing my knee, so I asked my mother how long we had been there at the lake. “Oh, about an hour," she answered. So God had healed it—all the way from raw and bloody to baby-skin perfect—in less than an hour. I thanked God a lot for that, and the whole matter remained our little secret. I have never told anyone—until now.

*** COME INTO MY HEART ***

At age four, I thought the sky was probably a kind of blue glass about a foot thick that formed the floor of Heaven. I imagined the biblical apostle Paul on his hands and knees looking down at us through that glass, so I asked my mother if he can really do that and if we will be able to see through the sky to the earth when we get to Heaven.

She said that if I let Jesus into my heart, I'll be able to do so.

Every week at Sunday school, my teacher had been saying that same thing, telling us kids we should ask Jesus to come into our hearts. Repeated every Sunday, the statement had quickly become meaningless to me. It seemed like a figure of speech someone was supposed to say on Sundays, much like how people say "Good morning" or "How are you?" without any serious thought behind their words.

But this time, it was my mother saying this to me. She asked me to close my eyes and pray silently in my mind, asking Jesus to really come into my heart.

I didn't want to do it. The thought seemed embarrassing, causing me to wish I had not even asked about Paul looking down from Heaven, which was what had started the whole thing. But I obeyed my mother and did exactly what she asked of me. I expected nothing to happen as a result, but boy, was I wrong! Immediately after I silently spoke those words, a rush of energy shot through me that felt wonderful. Then I became extremely happy—happier than I'd ever been in my life before. I was so happy that tears started falling from my eyes. I began crying out of pure joy. Day after day, I continued bouncing around everywhere with seemingly endless energy while in a state of endless bliss!

*** NO MORE DRAGONS ***

Jesus was suddenly my very best friend who stayed with me everywhere. At night, I would often have scary dreams. One such dream that came often was about a huge dragon chasing me, trying to catch me. But now, all I needed to do was ask Jesus to take me out of that scary dream, and I would immediately wake up every time. No more bad dreams! Asking Jesus for help always worked, without fail.

*** YES, NO, OR WAIT ***

The next year when I was five, a visiting Sunday school teacher told us that if we

asked God for something and listened carefully, we could hear Him whisper, "Yes," "No," or "Wait." I'd already been able to hear complete sentences from Him in a normal voice, but I decided I'd try what the Sunday school teacher had said. So, when we got home, I told my mother I was going to ask for a tricycle and see whether He'd whisper "Yes," "No," or "Wait." Then I closed my eyes, silently asked for a tricycle in my mind, then listened and heard God whisper softly, "Wait."

When I opened my eyes, mother asked me, "What did God say?" When I told her, "Wait," she laughed, "Well I'm glad He said wait, because I wasn't going to run out and buy you a new tricycle if He said yes!"

It was early the next morning when the phone rang. I was still in bed asleep as my mother answered the phone. It was our next-door neighbor, who said, "Mrs. Strader, you have the cutest little boy. My boy is all grown up now, but I still have his tricycle out in the garage and wonder if your boy would like to have it?"

So when I got out of bed and looked down the stairs that morning, there was the tricycle God had promised me, waiting for me to jump on it and ride! This was one more delightful proof that God always knows what's coming, and always has an answer ready.

*** I AM WITH YOU ***

One night when I was nine, I had just jumped into bed and turned to look out the bedroom door. I saw my mother and brother in the room across the hall from me happily talking together. I started mentally listing the contrasts: “They are in the light; I am in the dark. They are sharing conversation; I am here in silence. They are together; I am alone.”

At that moment, a fuzzy circle of light appeared on the ceiling over me. As I watched, it began growing larger and larger until this ivory light covered the entire ceiling. Then the head and chest of Jesus appeared in the center of it, looking down at me. He smiled and gently said, "I am with you, Tommy," then faded out again. The light illuminating the ceiling shrank gradually back to just a spot over me, then faded out.

I couldn't have been more impressed, believing that really was Jesus himself. When I told my mother the next day, she also believed it was really Jesus.

But years later, I realized He looked exactly like the picture of Jesus hanging on the wall in the room next to mine. The real Jesus would not look exactly like some artist's concept of Him, even down to wearing the same white robe. I no longer think what I saw was actually Jesus, but I am convinced it was a real spirit, a good spirit who wanted to assure me I wasn't alone and will always have

help available throughout my life. This spirit could have taken any form it wanted but chose the form that would be most meaningful to me, the image of Jesus looking just the way I thought of Him.

Many people around the world have had similar experiences. One such person was a Catholic niece of mine with deep spiritual interests who was so excited while telling us the Mother Mary appeared in her room and talked with her. I fully believe she had that experience. Also, followers of Hinduism sometimes meet Babaji or whichever god or ascended-master they most closely follow. I take all these experiences to be real. I believe they are real spirits assuming the form that will be most readily accepted by the follower they've come to commune with.

*** LISTENING TO MOTHER'S PRAYER ***

I was probably ten years old when one evening at the dinner table while preparing for our meal, I had finished my silent prayer and looked up and saw Mother was still silently praying with her eyes closed. I had the thought that I would like to hear what she was praying, so mentally I asked, "God, let me hear my mother's prayer."

Right after asking, I began hearing the words she was praying. It was in the sound of her normal voice and at a normal volume but clearly came from inside my head, not from where she was sitting. I only got to hear her last few sentences since she was nearing the end of her prayer. Then she opened her eyes and I told her about God letting me listen, quoting the last two sentences back to her. "That's right," she replied with a big smile.

*** SORE THROAT ***

In the fall of 1969 near my twenty-first birthday, I woke up to find my throat was extremely sore, the kind of sore throat that seriously hurts each time you swallow. So, I called the local spiritual healer that I knew best and asked for her help.

On the phone, she told me that only God and I could influence the condition of my throat—or anything else, for that matter—but that if I trusted something else to affect me, such as medicine or a Band-Aid, I thereby handed that item the power to affect me. This availed me to the item's advantages but also restricted me to its limitations, including any weaknesses or side effects it may harbor. She then asked me to come over to her house for a healing session.

I hung up the phone and walked straight to her house a half hour away, doing so without putting on a hat or a jacket even though it was shivering cold outside. All the way there, drizzling rain soaked through my thin T-shirt. I was totally drenched with cold water by the time I arrived at her home.

I had not worn a coat or anything else over my T-shirt, realizing that doing so would be exactly the same thing as putting on a Band-Aid—subjecting me to its limitations. I was determined to trust only God and myself to be in control of the situation.

As I pressed her doorbell and waited, I realized my sore throat was now gone—completely! It had vanished and I was no longer sick at all! I determined at that moment I wanted to *stay* this way, with God and myself in control and nothing else. No bad germ could touch me again, no illness of any kind.

This spiritual lady did her healing work for me that day, and so it was for the next fifteen months. I remained immune to everything. Others occasionally fell sick around me, but I knew I would never catch any of what they had.

Here are two concrete examples of my spiritual protection from the elements around me:

(1) On a bitterly cold day that winter, my brother, mother, and I ran out of the house and to the beach across the street to see a large wave roll in. We had seen it coming from the kitchen window without knowing what had made it. (As it turns out, a large, fast boat had passed before we glanced out the window, creating the wave.) After watching and listening to the wave hit the shoreline, we returned to the house. The first thing Mother did was grab three tissues, handing one to my brother and one to me, saving one for herself. I told her, "I don't need it. My nose is dry." "Oh, come on," she scolded. "You can't be dry after running through that cold air! Blow. Show me." So I took the tissue and strongly blew my nose into it several times, then showed her the tissue was still completely dry. There was not a single drop of water.

(2) Then came the day to get my smallpox vaccination. I didn't want it, always having thought that nickel-sized scar it leaves on the arm to be ugly. I didn't want an ugly scar on me for the rest of my life, so I wasn't going to let the germ in the vaccine affect me, either. There would be no scar on my arm.

Later that week, Mother took me to the clinic and the nurse did her job of punching my arm fifteen times with that pair of tiny germ-soaked needles. When several days passed and there was no hint of a scar or blister forming, my mother insisted on taking me back to the clinic and having the nurse poke my arm another fifteen times. *sigh* So, back we went, and again I didn't let those jabs have any effect on me at all. To this day, there is no scar on my arm.

*** THE END OF FIFTEEN PERFECT MONTHS ***

I mentioned above that my protection from all bad germs only lasted about fifteen

months, and there’s a definitive reason for that. I'm sure it could have lasted for my whole lifetime, but after fifteen months I made a very foolish mistake: I became increasingly rude, impudent, and disrespectful toward others about it. The fateful night that ended it all came when my mother-in-law said, "Tommy, put on a hat. You'll catch cold." And instead of acquiescing, I just retorted, "I don't catch colds," as I walked past her and out the door into the cold night air.

As I stepped outside, I suddenly felt the change and it frightened me. I looked back at her and my father-in-law on the couch behind her. They both were looking at me as though I were the epitome of ungrateful insolence. (Perhaps I was.) I thought I was feeling the strength of their insulted reaction blow the protection off me, which was frightening. I wished I'd never made that rude comment, but it was too late.

The result was that the next morning, I woke up hardly able to breathe. I was weak with a fever and had the cold she warned me about deep in my chest. Soon, my mother-in-law (who was always kind to me, even when I acted badly) had a steam humidifier running next to my head and Vicks VapoRub on my chest to help open my air passages again. I suspect the severity of this chest cold was due to my immune system having taken a fifteen-month vacation, thus growing weaker and weaker for fifteen months with no job to do.

I realized years later that it was not the reaction of my in-laws that ended the protection I'd had; the real cause was me no longer trusting "only God and myself" to influence my condition, as the healer had explained to be so essential. Instead, I had granted my in-laws power to affect me, allowing their belief in "catching cold" to take control in my life. And for doing that, I have no one to blame but myself.

*** THE HOLY SPIRIT ***

There is a strong (and helpful) connection between those Christians that believe in the power of the Holy Spirit, who practice that belief in concrete ways such as “speaking in tongues" and hands-on healing. I've seen it in action a number of times, even between individuals belonging to different denominations, for it is what they believe about the Holy Spirit that matters, not a church affiliation. Here are four examples:

1

One time, I went to a Catholic prayer group where a member asked me what I'd like him to pray for. I told him I felt hatred for a person who seriously wronged me and wanted to stop feeling that way, as I didn't want to "hate" anyone. He closed his eyes and prayed in tongues so emotionally that tears fell from his eyes. To my astonishment, my hatred was suddenly gone, and it has never returned. I wish I

knew how to contact him again to give him heartfelt thanks.

2

Perhaps a year later, a group of religious friends told me they were praying that I would learn to "speak in tongues" as they do through the power of the Holy Spirit. I thought to myself, "If anything, I'd rather hear the waterfall sound of deep meditation as described by Paramahansa Yogananda in his autobiography.* Later that day, I walked into the forest and sat down on a log to meditate alone. Soon, the sound of a waterfall began to play loud and clear in my head! I was quite surprised and delighted, wondering how I'd managed it.

After a couple of minutes, I remembered wishing for this exact experience a few hours earlier while I had been with the religious group. Their prayers had been answered by my wish being granted! A heartfelt "Thank you!" bounced merrily through my mind, although I didn't know who I was thanking. Someone was clearly listening to my thoughts, and I felt much appreciation toward them for this gift. I believe it was the unwaveringly strong belief and desire of those people that moved the Holy Spirit to provide this answer. Understanding that, I relaxed into my meditation, deeply enjoying the powerful sound of the cosmic waterfall sent to me by The Spirit because of the strength of their prayers.

3

Several years later in another town, I went to a church class that was teaching how to "speak in tongues." After the class, I went on to my night job of caring for the elderly in an old folks' home. Then at six a.m., my shift ended and I walked home in the dark while practicing "speaking in tongues" the way the church group had shown me.

Being "an unknown tongue," I had no idea what my mouth was actually saying, so my mind was free to wander. I thought, "I'm really hungry right now and have peanut butter and jelly at home. I'd love to make myself a peanut butter and jelly sandwich, but I have no bread. If only I had just two slices of whole wheat bread (the only bread I like), I could make that sandwich. But it's too early and still dark. All the stores are closed, so I'll just have to go to sleep hungry."

As I was thinking these thoughts, still "speaking in tongues," a young man came running up the hill from a side street and met me at the corner just as I was crossing his street. He said God had told him someone would be here who needs these, and then he held out his hand to me. Sitting on the open palm of his hand were two slices of whole wheat bread.

* "*Autobiography of a Yogi"* by Paramahansa Yogananda

I thanked him, explaining it was indeed exactly what I needed and carefully took the two slices from him. Thinking this must be an example of the Holy Spirit at work, I asked him if he belonged to a church that focused on experiencing the power of the Holy Spirit in ways such as speaking in tongues. He looked at me in some surprise as he answered in the affirmative, wondering how I knew, so I explained to him about the Holy Spirit bringing believers together who can help each other. I could sense the lightbulb blinking on in his head, knowing I was right. The experience had made this a special night for him too.

I walked the final block home, where I happily munched down on my peanut butter and jelly sandwich, thankful that help from the spiritual ream remained so totally real, always available in any place and at any time. And that particular sandwich was especially tasty, because it had come to me from God—literally!

4

It was raining heavily as I left a restaurant one day, so I asked the waitress to bring me two trash bags for me to use as a raincoat while waiting outside for a bus. She brought them, and as I stood in the doorway putting the trash bags on—punching a hole in the bottom of each and placing one around my waist like a skirt and the other over my head like a jacket—a man also leaving asked if he could give me a ride somewhere. We were in Irving, Texas, and I told him I needed to go all the way to Garland twenty-six miles away. He smiled and explained Garland was his destination as well, so I hopped into his truck and off we went.

On the way, he told me he normally wouldn't give rides but that the Holy Spirit had asked him to give me this one. Then he explained that he had invented a concrete road-working machine that completes road surfacing much faster than the commercial models, but he needed a way to control the depth of the blade according to the thickness of the cement. He said he didn’t know a way to do that since the condition of the cement below the surface isn't known until the blades make contact with it. So the machine driver must keep adjusting the blade height, slowing down road completion quite a bit.

With an engineering background, I knew exactly what he needed and explained it to him in detail as we drove. It was a true "Eureka! I have found it!" moment for him, exactly what he needed to hear. He became silent, all smiles ear to ear, and when we reached the destination of his workshop, that turned out to be only half a block away from my own destination. After he showed me his shop and equipment, it was a short and easy walk to exactly where I needed to be.

He needed engineering advice. I needed a ride. So the Holy Spirit brought us together, creating the perfect answer for both of us.

*** CALLING ON THE NAME OF JESUS ***

As an adult, calling on the name of Jesus continues to have real power for me. One time, I had fallen asleep on the floor of a public building hallway. No one was around because it was after midnight. When I woke up, I seemed to be paralyzed. I was wide awake but could not move at all, and there were softly murmuring voices around me from sources I could not see. So like when I was a child needing to escape a bad dream, I mentally called out, "Jesus, help me!" Right after I did so, a voice right behind my head (which would put it down within the floor) screamed loudly. The sound was that of a husky man both in pain and very angry. Then I was released, able move freely again. The murmuring voices were gone as well.

A short time later, I walked down that same hall and at the point where I'd been frozen, it now had the stink of recent defecation, even though nothing was visible in the area. This caught my attention because years before I'd read in a paperback* that when bad spirits make contact with the physical realm, they sometimes leave that same kind of stench behind.

This event was in no way pleasant nor desired; but I'm telling you about it here because it was clearly “magical” and really happened to me. It provides an example from a very different category of magical things that can be experienced.

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Years later, I was resting in a daydream-like state on my own bed when some evil thoughts entered my mind. I threw those thoughts out by replacing them with good thoughts. But moments later, those good thoughts began morphing into evil ones again. This process repeated several times, and each time the evil thoughts claimed more of my total attention. Suddenly, I realized these thoughts were coming from another consciousness slowly but successfully attempting to take over my mind! So once again I mentally called out, "Jesus, help me!" and the evil consciousness was immediately gone. Had I not known to call on the name of Jesus, I shudder to think of what such a "takeover" might have led to.

Chapter 3
MIND TO MIND

* I don't recall the book, but Google gives references to this phenomenon.

*** MIND READING ***

Back in the sixth grade, I conducted an experiment with two girlfriends from school. The experiment was for us to try to send a message to each other via ESP (mind reading) at bedtime. Of course, we didn't say what the message was going to be, but we would compare notes the next day.

Surprisingly, neither girl could hear me. I guess they simply had not been taught how to listen within, because I was able to hear both of them perfectly. On the first night, I was ready to fall asleep, having forgotten about the experiment we'd agreed to, when a voice in my head began saying, "Tommy, how's your voodoo plant?" repeatedly. At first, I thought it was God talking to me because the nature of the experience seemed the same. But the voice kept repeating the same words over and over again—"Tommy, how's your voodoo plant? Tommy, how's your voodoo plant? Tommy, how's your voodoo plant?"—which is something God would never do. So I pretty quickly grasped it was not God and remembered our plan for the experiment.

When I saw her the next day at school and told her what she'd said, she was very excited, exclaiming that I had gotten her words exactly right. I asked her why she kept repeating the same line over and over, and she answered simply, "Because I wanted to be sure you heard me!" At the same time, she admitted she had not heard anything back from me, although she had seriously tried.

A few nights later, I tried the same experiment with the second girl. Sure enough, at bedtime, I began hearing over and over, "I love you, I love you, I love you, talk to me . . . . love you, I love you, I love you, talk to me." I tried to answer her, but as was true with the first girl, she couldn't hear me. But the next day, sounding a little embarrassed, she confirmed I had gotten herwords exactly right.

It would have been great to have the two-way conversation I'd hoped for, but my guess as to why neither girl could hear me answer them is that my mother had been teaching me to hear the "small still voice" starting at age two, which I now know works for more than just hearing God. Conversely, neither of these girls had been given any background in the art of listening within.

*** DOGS CAN SHARE THOUGHTS WITH YOU ***

One day as a teenager, while Father filled the car's tank with gas, I was sitting on the front seat next to my dog, Dippy, who was looking out the window as an incoming car caused the bell in the gas station to ding. Looking at her at that same moment, I found I could see exactly what Dippy was thinking. To her, the front wall of the gas station was just a wall by itself. Dippy had no concept that the wall might have an inside with rooms. She thought the bell was a sound

made by the entire surface of that wall, having no concept of what a bell was or how/why it would “ding.” I remember this experience because it was the first time I had seen my dog's thoughts. Until then, I had not known such a thing was possible.

Years later, I took a class that taught about mentally sharing thoughts with dogs. The teacher said that dogs see images of the thoughts we hold behind our words, and they respond to what they see and feel far more than the actual sounds of our words. He then gave the example of how one might say, “Don't jump up on me!” to a dog who has muddy paws and then the dog immediately jumps up on that person. This happens because the person speaking to the dog is visualizing those mud-covered paws smearing mud all over their lovely white dress. The dog sees the image and thinks that's what it's supposed to do! Similarly, words like "don't" are meaningless to dogs because dogs can't mentally picture the *opposite* of what they see in your mind. Even humans would have a hard time doing that. How do you picture the opposite of what you're picturing? The point being relayed to us was to say *exactly* what we *do* mean—not what we don't—while mentally picturing the true intent of our words.

I soon got a chance to test this teaching on my neighbor's dog as the dog and I went for a walk. Three times she pranced out into the street, oblivious to oncoming traffic. Each time I screamed and chased her back to safety as quickly as I could. Then I remembered what we had discussed in that class.

I got down on my knees so we would be face-to-face, looked into her eyes, and explained slowly and carefully—in full graphic detail—what it would be like if a tire ran over her body, mentally picturing in bright colors how her bones and blood would respond as I spoke the matching words. That one little talk worked amazingly well. Starting with the next car that approached, she would then stop, lay her head on my shoes, and keep her eyes pinched so tightly shut they quivered. She wouldn't move again until the car had passed. And after that, I never again saw her step out into the street—ever!

***SHARING THE MUSIC ***

One night, I was dreaming that music was playing to a particular beat. My wife's leg happened to be resting against mine and began twitching to the exact beat of the music, waking me up. It stopped when the dream ended. To see if her being perfectly on the beat with the music was only a coincidence, I gently laid my fingertips on her side and started imagining music with a distinctively different beat. Only four seconds later, the muscles of her skin below my fingers started gently jerking to the new rhythm perfectly, including the complexities I'd intentionally added to the beat!

This frightened me. I don't know why; it seems silly now. Perhaps I was mostly

"scared of the dark," it being a spooky setting for such an event. But for whatever reason, I really was frightened, moved a small distance away from her, and never tried that experiment again.

*** FINGERTIPS & DEEP BREATHS ***

On a sunny afternoon some days later, my wife was sleeping on our living room couch. I took that opportunity to attempt beaming rays of healthy energy to her from my fingertips while about four feet away. It was successful, resulting in her taking a really deep breath. I repeated the experiment several more times, including from behind her head to make sure she could not possibly be seeing me. Each time the result was the same: one long, slow deep breath, then returning back to normal breathing. I knew for sure she was asleep, unable to physically see or hear me.

*** BOTH OUT OF OUR BODIES ***

Sometimes my spirit slips out of my physical body. Originally this phenomena scared me, but I have learned to just accept it, relax, and wait for it to slip back in again. No harm done.

The first week of our marriage, I rolled onto my left side, and the "slip out" soon occurred. No problem. I just relaxed and patiently waited for my astral self to realign with my physical self, which it soon did.

But perhaps an hour later, as I sat working quietly at our desk with my wife still in our bed, I saw her roll over the same way and into the same spot where I had slipped out of my body only an hour before. Moments after that, I saw her lips quivering, trying to say something but unable to get the sound out. Concerned, I went over to her and leaned closely over her face to listen for her words. Then I just barely heard her say, "Help me! Help me! I want out of here!" Realizing she, too, had slipped out of her body, I kissed her on the lips to bring her back.

With several gasps for air, she was back and immediately reached up and hugged me. Soon I asked her what had happened, and yes, it was the same experience I'd had an hour before her. As far as I know, that was the only time she experienced consciously slipping out of her body. Having no idea what it meant or how to handle it, she had become seriously frightened. Because of her fear, I never told her she had somehow followed me to where I had just been, thinking she might fear she would follow me there again.

It seemed truly amazing to me for two people to be so connected that one slipping out of their body could result in the other slipping out as well, in exactly the same manner without the second person even knowing anything about how

to do it.

*** DREAM TURNED ASTRAL TRAVEL ***

One night while on a park bench watching the city lights glistening on the water along a Newark beach, I realized I was physically in Boulder, Colorado, and only dreaming I was in Newark, New Jersey! I thought, “My in-laws live here. While out in my dream body, why not turn this into an ‘astral travel’ dventure and go visit them?” So I did. But first, as I floated by the city swimming pool, I noticed it was empty, which was something I'd never seen before. And when I reached their front porch, I saw it had been repainted brown.

Inside, I found my mother-in-law sitting on a chair in the living room. I smiled and greeted her, but she instantly became frightened and began repeating over and over fears for her daughter, my wife: “Where is Hatti? What has happened to Hatti? What is wrong with Hatti?” I kept telling her, “Nothing is wrong with Hatti! Hatti's fine! This is a dream! You're dreaming! I'm dreaming! We are both dreaming! Nothing is wrong!” But she couldn't hear me and kept frantically asking over and over again. Soon I was yelling my words as loud as I could in a dream, pointing to her about her dreaming, pointing to myself about my dreaming. But it didn't do any good; she could only see me and didn't understand my gestures. I finally had to leave with her still calling out her concerns behind me, basically an endless repeat of “What happened to Hatti!”, and there was nothing I could do to help her understand.

The next morning, I realized the problem was that she thought I had traveled all the way from Boulder, CO, to Newark, NJ, alone, which could only mean something terrible had happened to her daughter. That was certainly not what I had envisioned when I decided to pay her a visit in our dreams!

I told Hatti, so right away Hatti called her mother on the phone to assure her nothing was wrong and asked if she remembered the dream. My mother-in-law answered that yes, she remembered, but because it had been such a very scary dream she did not want to talk about it at all. My father-in-law also confirmed that yes, the swimming pool had been drained, and yes, he had just finished repainting the front porch from gray to brown. I had seen all those things correctly while in the astral plane.

*** ASTRAL SOUNDS IN MEDITATION ***

Yogis and swamis from India teach that there is a sound for each chakra that one should strive to hear during meditation. I was attempting to learn meditation on my own, listening for these sounds, but had not yet been able to hear them.

Then I spent a couple of weeks staying with a group of like-minded friends who were also into Eastern meditation. And the first time we all meditated together, I finally heard each of the sounds I'd read about, loud and clear! Paramahansa Yogananda lists them as "melodic strains of the humming of a bee, the tone of a flute, a stringed instrument such as a harp, a bell-like or gong sound, [and] the soothing roar of a distant sea." It was not just my imagination, for I was hearing each of these sounds at a volume much higher than simple imagination could produce.

This was a great lesson for me on the power of "joining forces" with others of like mind, inwardly forming a "group consciousness." Empowered by the energy of each of us mentally pulling in the same direction, I was swept beyond my mental blocks and achieved our common goal.

In addition, the energy we built as a group living together enabled me to be satisfied with only five hours of sleep each of those nights instead of requiring my usual eight or nine hours. I was easily waking up, ready to go all the way through each new day. I hoped this effect would last well into the future beyond my time with them, but alas, as soon as those two weeks were over, I quickly required the full eight hours of sleep again.

*** QUANTUM ENTANGLEMENT ***

For years I believed that the cosmic rule was simply that you could not force people to experience anything they are not willing to believe is possible. This, I thought, was to protect people's right to maintain their own personal reality, free from the intrusion of experiences others believe in but which they don't.

But a single event showed me there's more to the “rule” than that. It appears that any given experience is influenced by everyone aware of it, even if their awareness is only of the *concept* of that experience, without a need for them to have any tangible involvement.

I learned this from an experiment I was doing on my computer at home. I had written a small program in which the internal number generator rapidly produced an endless string of randomly ordered 1s and 0s. If I pressed the space bar while a 1 was active, the monitor's screen would turn (or stay) green. But if I pressed the space bar while a 0 was active, the monitor's screen would turn (or stay) red. The goal was to press the space bar more than a hundred times per session, keeping the screen green as much as possible by sensing the exact moment to press the space bar each time, again and again. The computer was not measuring how long the screen remained green but rather what percentage of space-bar presses were on a 1 instead of a 0.

I performed sessions of this experiment several times a day for a week. The

results were clearly phenomenal. Each day my bar pressing produced about 80 percent green screens to only 20 percent red screens, something statistically not possible to continuously happen at random. There was clearly an active link between the workings of the computer and the intentions of my mind.

The next step was to learn what influence a nonbeliever becoming aware of the experiment might make. For this test, I chose the psychology professor I mentioned at the top of this book, the one who said, "Of course there's no such thing as mind reading." I met him in the psychology building hallway and told him all about my experiment and the 80 percent success rate as we walked down the hall together toward his research lab.

I did not expect verbally sharing my experiment with him to change anything at all, for he was not in any way being "forced" to experience something he did not believe. I was intentionally leaving it easy for him to conclude my computer program was flawed, producing inaccurate results. So, if my theory was correct, everything should remain the same; I should still get an 80 percent success rate.

My theory was wrong. The ratio between red and green immediately fell to the normally expected 50/50. My ability to produce the 80 percent success rate had vanished! Even several months later without mentioning it again, I was still unable to escape the 50:50 ratio.

So apparently, the "entanglement theory of quantum physics" applies to two human minds as well as subatomic particles. By simply telling him about it, his mind had become "entangled" with my mind—or possibly with the experiment itself—which allowed his disbelief to become the ruling influence over my experimental results. I also suspect that his views matching what so many people around us also believe to be reality gave additional power to his influence.

*** CLOSE TO THE WINNING NUMBER ***

I once had the thought to try and magically see the winning lottery number and get rich! So one day, I went into a meditative state to try and see it. But my gosh! As I was getting close, I sensed there were a large number of other people around me also getting close, and their situations seemed so painfully desperate! I mean really, truly, *painfully* desperate! It was like their lives depended on it, much like someone being held underwater absolutely desperate to be allowed to breathe air again.

I did not want to compete with that. And I did not try to see what was happening in the lives of any of those people to cause their desperation; I already knew I wouldn't want to take that winning number away from someone else who needed it so much more than I. So that was the end of my meditation, and I will never return there again. I will never try to take away what another so badly needs.

*** PEOPLE WITH BAD ENERGY ***

I once had the unpleasant task of bailing a girl out of jail who had been arrested for drunk driving. When I looked through the thick glass at the lady prisoners and woman guards on the other side, I was astonished by how intense and heavy the energy from the guards felt. I was feeling it from thirty feet away and on the other side of thick glass; clearly, it was energy that came from forcibly controlling the prisoners inside against their will. But my gosh! What an unpleasant energy to have to carry with you all the time!

Another time, I talked on the phone with a man who had previously worked as a prison guard over both men and women and felt the same kind of energy from him. How could anyone live with that? He admitted that his wife had divorced him because of that same energy. He had been bringing it home with him every day, and she finally had to give up on her efforts to deal with feeling that on a daily basis, it being something so far from pleasant.

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A different but likewise unpleasant energy emanated from a man I encountered at a newspaper office trying to place an ad. He was seeking girls who wished to be humiliated and forced to do highly perverted things. I could feel his unpleasant energy clear across the lobby from perhaps thirty feet away, and it was clear from facial expressions I saw on others—and the way they walked way around him—that they, too, could feel it without a need to hear his words.

****

I suspect the unpleasant energy most useful to understand is the energy of someone who knows they are doing you wrong and is wondering when you'll figure it out. They will look at you with a matching expression on their face, which is also the moment when you can feel that energy most intensely. When this happens, you need to rescue yourself, your property, and your whole situation from them as quickly as you can, removing that person entirely from your life.

I have seen and felt this "look" several times. It always feels the same whether the person is young or old, male or female, and always means the same thing. Here are five quick examples from my past.

1

A handsome man about twenty-five years old was in my apartment when I came out of the shower. I don't know how he got in, my door having been locked. He claimed he was with apartment maintenance and had been sent to check the

plumbing. But he then gave me that infamous look and energy before going out the door. Soon after, I discovered he'd gone through my drawers and stolen my wallet from one of them! I contacted management and they informed me that no one had been sent to my apartment, nor did they have an employee fitting his description.

2

The new wife of a neighbor had that same energy when I first met her. I had no idea why she would be radiating that feeling, especially when she should be radiating the happiness of a new marriage. But a few weeks later, her husband had to divorce her because she had gotten ahold of his brother's bank account and emptied it!

3

A woman was picking up her things from a restaurant where I once worked. She gave me that look before she drove away in her truck, causing me to wonder what she'd stolen. We soon discovered she and her companion had taken the large self-standing stainless steel sink that we had been waiting for the plumber to come install!

4

I once had to leave a guest in my apartment while I went to work. When I got home, he gave me that look with its corresponding feeling. Well, turns out he had stolen my new telephone, still in its box, and several other pricey items that would be easy to sell at a pawn shop.

5

A homeless girl once stayed with my next-door neighbor for a few days. They asked me to take her out to a restaurant, so I did. As we sat across the table from each other, I felt that energy radiating from her and wondered, “What has she done?” Well, she had not done anything . . . yet. But when she left, she kept a key. Only a few days later while everyone was at work, she came back with a couple of male friends and emptied my neighbor's apartment of everything of value, including large items such as their TV, VCR, and microwave. Their most valuable possessions were all gone when they came home.

*** YOU BECOME WHO YOU ASSOCIATE WITH ***

Throughout my life I have found it extremely important to stay in the company of those whose views and goals harmonize with my own, as they work to build mutual success in all areas shared with me. It is equally important to stay far

away from those who would like to pull you off course to meet their own selfish needs. I cannot stress enough how important this really is, for when you can feel another person's energy—whether it's good or bad energy—you are being affected by them deep within. They are affecting your thoughts, your emotions, your values, your goals and dreams, and even the personal environment you live in. When you can feel them, they are manipulating who you are, even if you are not conscious of it, even if they are not intentionally doing it. So focus on being in the company of good people, those whose influence will make you a better person each day, and always stay alert to keep away from those who would tear you down from the inside.

Chapter 4

SEEING VISIONS

In addition to simple imagination, I often see visions produced via four different media. I've named them "Sparkle Vision," "Water Vision," "Shadow Vision," and "Purple Vision."

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SPARKLE VISION is by far the most impressive, lighting up within my field of view like many thousands of sparkling pixels in bright colors. When I saw Jesus over my bed at age eight, He appeared in "Sparkle Vision." I think Sparkle Vision is also how we see in vivid dreams, because I've experienced how Sparkle Vision responds to crossing over the line between wake and sleep in both directions—that is, when falling asleep and also when waking up.

From Dreaming to Waking: I once woke up in the morning in time to see a very old man leaning over our bed. When I looked into his eyes, he jumped back, startled to realize I could see him too! I believe he was a ghost of someone recently deceased, still on the earth and curious about things like couples in their beds. I saw him in Sparkle Vision leftover from being in the dream state, but I quickly woke up enough that I lost sight of him as my Sparkle Vision turned off for the day.

There was also a time I realized I was waking up and didn't want to, so I gazed solidly at the person standing in front of me as a way to hold onto the dream. What happened was that the person I was staring at (and everything around him) became smaller and smaller as well as fainter and fainter. Finally, I was looking at him only in my imagination without there ever having been a discernible point at which it stopped being a dream and started being imagination. The transition between the two states was a seamless flow, ending with the dream still completely there but obviously only in my imagination and much reduced in size.

From Waking to Dreaming: In the other direction, I was falling asleep one night

while imagining myself flying over a neighborhood of houses. The scene was faint and pale because it was only my imagination. But suddenly I was asleep enough that my Sparkle Vision kicked in, ready to light up my dreams. This caused the scene I was imagining to quite suddenly light up brilliantly and take on intense colors. This happened without changing the scene size, action, or content in any way; it simply burst into full and bright Sparkle Vision color! I wanted to enjoy watching it in this new and far more beautiful state, but unfortunately, my surprise at the change woke me back up enough to cause the Sparkle Vision to turn off again just as quickly as it had turned on. Disappointed, I was back to watching the houses sail by below within the paleness of an imagined image only.

****

I'm sure the reason why Sparkle Vision is normally turned off during the day is the necessity of being able to discern between what is physically real and what is spiritually real. I believe I could have kept my Sparkle Vision turned on but I quickly learned not to do so, afraid of what might happen. Thus, it has learned to turn itself off automatically for me by habit, without me even thinking about it. Sparkle Vision is a wonderful thing, but experiencing both physical and spiritual worlds together could lead to terrible mistakes well beyond just being confusing. Even remembering Sparkle Vision events from our dreams could confuse our memories about which experiences were in which world, which is why most dreams are soon forgotten. To be in control of our lives, we need to be living in one world at a time.

WATER VISION works for me because I am very near-sighted. When looking at a dot of light in the dark (such as a distant street lamp at night), nearsightedness causes the light to blur into a large circle. Then, forces from the spiritual realm can magically distort the shape of tear water on the surface of my eyes to cause light passing through to bend at various angles, resulting in the circle of light I see having darker and lighter areas instead of being all one smooth brightness. Normally, the patterns I see are meaningless and change each time I blink, because blinking moves the tear water around on my eyes. But unseen forces can reshape this water to produce meaningful and detailed images for me to see that sometimes last until I turn my head a different direction.

One night as a teenager, I asked God to show me how many months would pass before I saw an old friend again whom I missed very much. Then I looked at the circle of light created by the blur of the tiny orange neon nightlight plugged into my wall. I was expecting to need to search the blur for a number within the mixed patterns I usually saw, but this time the circle was filled with a large and perfect number ten. In fact, it looked like a printed font, the “one” having the little nose and foot serif fonts use and the “zero” being fatter on the sides. This was obviously an intentional number ten being shown to me with no room for misinterpretation.

I saw this ten on the night of the sixteenth. So the next day, I bought ten little boxes of candy and ate one box each month to mark the passage of time. Without my doing anything at all to choose the day, I finally met her again face-to-face on the seventeenth, exactly ten months later.

SHADOW VISION is like seeing faint shadows moving about the room that usually go unnoticed because they are so faint. I assumed these faint shadows were only physical phenomena within my eyes resulting from movement of blood through vessels behind the optic nerve or from some similar cause. I had no idea the shadows had any deeper cause or meaning until I was in a metaphysical class where the instructor was telling us about the spirits in the room he could see—where they had been, where they were now, how they had been moving, etc. As he spoke, I realized he was stating exactly where the shadows I saw had been, where they were now, and how they were moving about the room, meaning the faint shadows I frequently see are actually living spirits!

It was a real surprise to learn I'd been seeing spirits all this time, but the knowledge of this is not of any value to me. The shadows are far too faint for me to make out what they are actually doing or why, so I still just ignore them. Although I do look up to say hi once in a while.

PURPLE VISION is totally useless. It's just something I used to see a lot of: greenish-gray blobs slowly moving around on purple-gray backgrounds (neither one a pretty color). I usually noticed them when my eyes were shut. But occasionally, they would become rather intense during the day with my eyes open. In fact, I have pulled my car over to the side of the road twice and waited for the blobs to pass, concerned they might interfere with my ability to see the road.

For years, I assumed these blobs were something physical affecting my optic nerves, such as too much pressure from blood flow. But one day I tried thinking a blob over to one side of my field of vision, and it moved there! Coincidence? I tried several more times, and with each attempt the blobs cooperated, soon moving to where I intended them to go.

Obviously, this was a mental phenomenon instead of a physical one. So I started commanding the blobs to simply disappear; I didn't want to see them anymore! It took a few weeks, but I am now "blob free," cured of them by mental intention alone.

*** THE PSYCHIC FAIR ***

I was once at the home of a teacher of metaphysics who was teaching me to do "psychic readings." Under her light hypnosis, I told her what I saw happening at

the psychic fair she would be sponsoring in a few days. At the end, she told me I did marvelously and that she knew who each of the people were whom I had described to her, even going on to say she wanted me to have a booth at her fair to do psychic readings like this one. "If you can do as well at the fair as you did just now, that will be marvelous," she added.

So, I participated as she wished at the fair. And I was surprised to recognize several of the very people I'd seen so clearly in my mind during our practice reading in her home. One was a young man with a goatee I'd seen as being angry. In the practice session, I assumed he must be angry with me about something, but in reality he was angry that more people were not showing up at the fair and coming to his booth, making the process a waste of his time.

When I got a chance, I walked over to another booth where, amazingly, the girl inside was wearing the exact blouse I'd seen her wearing in my practice session. It had exactly the same large red-and-black blobs on a white background I had envisioned. She told me, "Well, that's pretty amazing because it's not something I'd even planned to wear. It was just lying on the bed as I went out the door, so I grabbed it on the way out.”

For me, this experience was one more proof that the complete future already exists in some form, making it possible to see things in advance, from a person's looks and state of mind to the exact clothing someone will wear.

Chapter 5

GHOSTS, ANGELS, AND OTHER SPIRITS

*** I SAW A GHOST! ***

Yes, I’ve seen ghosts at least four times—that is, the standard type of encounter that most people think of as being ghosts. And I've learned that such ghosts are scared of people, in spite of having always heard it's supposed to be the other way around!

1

The first encounter was in a house where two housemates told me the owners couldn’t keep it rented because of the ghost. One night, I saw a yellowish-green light through the doorway, floating across the middle of the living room. Assuming it was the ghost, I jumped up and ran toward it to investigate. But to my disappointment, this “greenish light” quickly took off, disappearing through the nearest wall, accompanied by the sound of an astonished gasp.

2

The second experience was while I was waking up out of a dream early one sunlit morning. It was the old man I told you about above who had been leaning over our bed, the one I saw super clearly in Sparkle Vision.

3

The third “ghost” I saw was actually a living person who was simply out of her body at the time. We were sitting in a meditation circle when I saw something resembling a small fluffy white cloud drift into the center of our circle from my right, then it stopped. It looked similar to the ghost who appeared as a yellowish-green light described above, but this one was white. I thought, “Hmm. What is that? I don’t think it’s supposed to be here.” Thinking it was only some energy, I made an effort to push it down through the floor into the ground and it quickly went, my intention being for it to be cleansed by the Earth spirits.

After the meditation, each person described what they had experienced. To my complete surprise, a girl to my far right said she had actually drifted out of her body, very gently, into the center of the circle. But suddenly, she dove straight down into the ground, out of her own control. She added, “That has never happened to me before.” Well, it was a real surprise for me, too, for until then I had no idea the ghosts of living people looked like little fluffy white clouds.

So should you see a small fluffy white cloud floating by in front of you some day, be kind to it; it just might be your neighbor, very much alive.

4

The fourth ghost I saw was actually trying to scare me (and succeeded). I was alone in a hotel room at night and he jumped up from the floor, standing tall in front of me, raising both arms quickly toward the ceiling. But although my heart missed a beat or two, I was in no real danger. And I think it's probably rare for ghosts to want to play silly games like that. Maybe I should have said to him, "Get a life!"

*** THE WHISTLER ***

During our college years, probably in 1969, my brother and I were playing the board game Stratego. As I considered my next move, a spirit floated up to me and asked to be allowed to whistle through me. I agreed to let it, and suddenly I knew exactly how to do a really fancy musical whistle. I curled my lips and let the music flow with great vibrato and everything.

My brother gazed at me in amazement, exclaiming, "I didn't know you knew how to do that!"

"I didn't," I told him. "It was a spirit."

The sense of how to whistle that way felt as natural as the knowledge of how to walk, write with a pencil, chew food, swallow, or any number of other things we develop a natural sense of how to do with our bodies. So I thought this new ability would last forever because I now had the knowledge, the feel of it in me everywhere; how could such a thing be forgotten? I wanted to whistle like that some more.

But the spirit, now satisfied, floated away. And when he did, the inner feel and knowledge left me as well. This was astonishing to me, seemingly equal to forgetting how to chew, walk, or write. How could such things be forgotten once you've gained the feel for them so clearly? I didn't know such "forgetting" was possible, but it was. The lovely whistle was gone forever.

For me, it was simply a learning experience, but a recent documentary I saw explained that spirits use this same technique for critically important things, such as helping a surgeon successfully save a patient's life in the operating room. Just as the knowledge of how to whistle felt as though it were my own, the surgeon thinks it’s his own wisdom regarding what to do next and how to move his fingers, how to best handle the tools. Such operations are too important for the spirit to politely ask permission first, however, and after the surgery, the spirit leaves without the surgeon ever knowing an unseen spirit enabled him to succeed.

Actually, I think in those cases a more correct name for such a spirit is “angel.”

*** THE LETTER FROM HEAVEN ***

Back when I was twenty, I was resting on my back on the carpeted floor of my room one day when, to my surprise, an unseen spirit began giving me advice for living wisely and imparting knowledge relating to my family in the coming days. I listened, wishing I had a pen and paper handy to write things down, for it was much too much information for me to remember. At the end, I said "I can't remember all that, it's just too much. Can you please tell me again?"

To my surprise, the spirit went back to the beginning and repeated the entire speech, word for word, as though reading it from a letter written to me from someone in heaven. When I told my mother about it, she believed that to be the case. And from the style, she assumed it was from her father's sister, my Aunt Zoe, who had died several years earlier. I told her one particular line from the letter the spirit had read to me: "You need to be especially kind to your mother, because she has problems you don't know anything about."

Mother looked straight at me with a most serious expression right after I said that, then tears fell from her eyes. I didn't know why; she didn't say. It wasn't until a number of years later that I learned she had been hiding the fact that her brother had turned gay, and her husband (my father) was having an affair with his assistant at work. No wonder she needed me to "be especially kind to [my] mother." I truly had no idea about any of that at the time.

*** PERFECT CIRCLE ***

In the mid-1960s, I read an article in *Moody* magazine about a man and his girlfriend walking through the woods. To their total surprise, a large bubble, perfectly round, came floating by. In it, they could see and hear what they thought were some girls in a class being taught by their teacher. The circle continued floating on until it could no longer be seen or heard. But both of them were certain they had seen and heard it.

Decades later in the 1980s, I was awakened from sleep in the night by voices. I opened my eyes in time to see a perfectly round bubble about three feet across floating through my room. In it were a couple of young boys being scolded by a man I guessed was their father. I sat up in bed and watched it float right through the outside wall next to my bed. I jumped to the window but couldn't see it in the dark outside; however, I could still hear their voices through the window until the bubble floated too far away to be heard.

My theory is—and it's only a theory—that the man and two boys were in a mutually-shared dream, out in their dream bodies. And the total environment of their dream floated through my room appearing like a bubble.

There was another experience I had in the 1970s similar to that except I didn't see anything, nor was the sound "floating away." I was inside my step van during the day and heard a woman angrily scolding a child who was angrily crying back at her. I opened the door of the van and stepped outside, walked around, but I could no longer hear them. But when I went back inside the van, as soon as I closed the door, I heard them again. The child stopped crying and the voice of the woman became less stressful. I repeated the process of stepping outside and returning to the van several times, always with the same results: hearing them inside and hearing nothing anywhere outside. I gave up and just listened inside the van until the scolding was over, and then I didn't hear them anymore.

*** BEING AN ANGEL ***

As a senior in high school, one evening while doing homework at my desk in my room I sensed the presence of a spirit near me. It felt gentle, completely harmless—even familiar, as though we knew each other somehow. At the same

time, it was clearly deeply distressed with sadness, wanting to enter my personal space to hide away and rest a while. I trusted all those feelings, so I said, “Yes. Come.”

Almost instantly, I felt as though the spirit was hugging me, not from the outside but from within me, as though it was hugging my heart and doing so in a loving way. I didn't resist at all, continuing my homework at my desk. During the next half hour, I felt it relax more and more, its emotions becoming peaceful. It obviously felt the comfort my own emotions were offering to it. Then it seemed to be falling asleep. A while later, it was gone, without me even knowing when it left.

That was an experience I'd never had before nor have ever had again.

Not long after, my high school girlfriend, Velma, who'd gone off to college for a year came to visit some old friends at the high school. She sat down with me during lunch and told the story of how the college boyfriend she'd given her heart to—suddenly and quite angrily—broke up with her for seemingly no reason one evening and then was gone. She had felt so crushed by that event and had prayed, “I need an angel or someone to hold me right now. Please, God. This is too painful to bear alone!” She said that right away, God sent her an angel. She could feel the angel holding her as it soothed her emotions until she fell asleep.

I never said a word to Velma about having been that angel; it would not have fit her personal theology. But I knew the truth, and I felt very honored to have been allowed to help her in that way when she really needed me.

*** HOT BUTTERED ROLLS ***

I met a real angel when I was only two years old, although at the time I believed she was my mother. She walked up to me holding a tray of freshly baked rolls, still hot with golden butter melting down their sides.

She invited me to have one and I wanted to reach out and take a roll, as they smelled wonderful. Hot buttered rolls were one of my favorite things. But I was in a stubborn mood and, for no good reason, refused. She kept sweetly asking me to try just one, to take a bite, continuing to talk to me about how good a roll would taste. But having already said no, I now refused to give in even though I was wishing I had said yes. They really did smell so delicious, yet I continued shaking my head and answering no.

At the end, I noticed for the first time that she had tears of disappointment in her eyes. Seeing that I had made her sad enough to cry, I instantly felt painfully sympathetic and was ready to say yes and bite into a roll, knowing it would be wonderfully delicious and wanting to take away her sadness. But before I could reach for one, she turned and walked out through the wall, instead of through the

nearby door.

If I had been older, I would have been totally astonished. But being only two years old, I assumed walking through walls was something mothers could do, still believing she was indeed my own mother. So I began calling for her to come back. I wanted to eat the roll now! I wanted her not to cry, not to be sad. I was ready to say yes. "Please come back!" But no one came, because my actual mother had not been anywhere around me that whole time. I didn't know that, soon crying like the baby I was, thinking she was ignoring me. I could not understand why she wouldn't return. Deeply sorry and crying with increasing regret, I realized my bad behavior was having lasting effects that I could not control, could not undo.

I'm an old man now, and that experience at age two has had deep and lasting effects throughout my life. Most importantly, it made me far more conscious of other people's feelings. From that day forward, I have always wanted to avoid bringing sadness or tears to anyone, making a real effort to never again let foolish stubbornness upset another person. And secondly, it taught me that speaking and acting contrary to what I really want can have long-lasting effects, effects equally contrary to what I actually want that I cannot change or undo, regardless of how much I regret my actions that caused the problem.

And in time, I came to realize those two important lessons were the reason the angel came to visit me. She was there to be my teacher. She walked out through the wall so that in time, I would realize she was an angel and forever know that angels are real and care about us, doing things to help us understand what matters in life and guiding us to become far better people than we would know how to be without them.

*** LOOK AT THE CEILING! ***

A metaphysical teacher giving his first class on his new IRC chat channel (before the invention of more modern chat programs) told us the story of a night when he was a small child. His room filled with entities he could see, performing a show for him in various ways. He sat up in bed and watched in amazement. That had started his lifelong serious focus in magic and the spiritual world, knowing it was totally real from a very early age.

I was super interested in his story because the same thing happened to me at age three. I also sat up in bed to watch the show. As the dancing, music, and singing proceeded around me, I glanced at my mother beside me, as we were in her bed. Her deep, slow breathing assured me she was still very much asleep, and I wondered how she could possibly sleep through all this music and activity! I saw then that there was something as tall as a human behind my child-sized closet dresser. I felt afraid of him both because of his size and because he had

horns and a nose like a bull. He was dancing side to side with his hands raised out by either side of his head, palms facing me.

On the floor to my left were about twenty-five little people (fairies?), each about ten inches tall. They were dancing around in a circle and singing merrily. Then they shouted to me with their tiny voices and all in unison, repeating, "Look at the ceiling! Look at the ceiling! Look at the ceiling!" I looked up and the ceiling now looked like a large stained glass window, for there were many sections in a multitude of colors. They were random geometric shapes, all with straight sides between black borders. There were many triangles and other odd shapes averaging a foot across, each one different from any other.

After that display, they all quietly left.

I wish I had been interested in learning more about them, wish I had invited them back, learned to talk with them, and learned to share. But I was far too young for that.

Next to that dresser was a vent that went down to the furnace in the basement. The vent was located on the wall at the floor. I assumed the "big wolf" had left through that vent and must live in the basement. So for several weeks each morning, I sat in front of the vent and asked the wolf to please not come back and scare me again.

Of course wolves don't have horns or a bull's nose, but I was too young to know that. And in compliance with my plea, he never came back. But I never forgot the amazing experience of witnessing him and his band of tiny people.

*** HAPPY SPIRITS LIVING IN PRETTY LITTLE HOUSES ***

A medicine woman I knew once invited a student into her room for a discussion of personal matters. But that student soon asked her if they could continue their discussion somewhere else, complaining that there were so many spirits in the room he was having trouble hearing his own thoughts. The medicine woman told me about this, saying his words had surprised her because she wasn't being bothered by “spirit voices” or anything similar.

A week or so later, I went into her room alone to get something they needed and WOW, that student had been so correct! I heard lots of little voices gently speaking to each other on various topics. But far more than the voices, it was sensing their thoughts that interfered with my own thinking. I now understood what that student had been complaining about!

The reason the spirits were there, I surmise, is because the medicine woman had three levels of glass shelves all along one wall from one end of her long room to

the other, each covered with many trinkets of value that had been given to her by various students and friends over the years. I remember a hand-blown and hand-painted pink glass antique egg from France secured in a delicate metal frame with a latch that opened and closed the egg. There was also a carved figure that had been a button on a suit worn by a Roman soldier perhaps two thousand years ago, before the fall of Rome. Among these were many, many other small but very special items on those shelves, many of them being true antiques.

My guess is that some spirit found this treasure and thought of them as little spirit houses, so he invited all his friends to come move in and they in turn invited all their friends to do the same, eventually forming quite a happy little community of spirits! It gave me a feeling like "Look at that! This is really cool!", and reminded me of the many children's stories about fairies such as Tinkerbell; their communities and what they use for houses. Is the similarity merely a coincidence, or did such stories originate from people who'd seen this kind of activity in the past the way I was seeing it now? In any case, I did have to leave the room soon in order to unclutter my mind and think clearly again.

*** PROBLEM SPIRITS ***

The famous Edgar Cayce explained that there are spirits who have done things that cut them off from their inner source of universal life.—Oops! I'd call that a serious problem!—Starving for more energy, they see each of us as a well-lit oasis in their dark, dry desert. To them we look like food! This results in them being a problem for us too, so they really are "problem spirits".

The most common type are kinda like flies—little entities that just want to grab a quick snack from you now and then, but sometimes this requires getting you upset. So they'll put thoughts/feelings into your head to upset you, often making you angry, which works even better if there is someone present you can get into a heated argument with. When this happens, the two of you become like a pair of water fountains shooting your life energy high into the air as you quarrel! In the end, you both wind up exhausted, and the problem spirit floats away feeling totally satisfied with the delicious meal he just gulped down at your expense.

But his plight is not hopeless. I took a class on astral travel in which students were taught to look down into the dark realm of problem spirits from a higher level, and show individual spirits where the light above is. This enables them to regain their connection to universal life, if they choose to rise into that light. I didn't manage to help in this way myself, but saw the bright flash of light that occurs on the spiritual level when another student in the class succeeded.

*** THE DEVIL ***

One warm sunny day at age thirteen, while sitting on a park bench in front of our goldfish pond, I was pondering things I'd been told about the devil, curious as to what was really true. Specifically, can Satan hear the thoughts in our minds? Or can he not? A leaf had just fallen into the center of the pond and was slowly drifting toward me. Although I felt guilty for doing so, I decided to try a little experiment to answer the above question. In my mind only, I said “Satan, if you can hear me, make that leaf reverse direction and touch the far side of the pond.”

No more than four seconds later a sudden wind rustled loudly through the leaves of the tree over me, then reached the pond with such strength as to sent that leaf sailing back across the pond in exactly the opposite direction, and then slamming it hard against the pond's cement wall on the far side.

That truly frightened me, and I have never attempted to talk to the devil again.

I've heard various stories as to what and who the devil actually is, but the story that makes the most sense to me, by seeming consistent with my experiences, is this:

What people call "The Devil" did not always exist. But for thousands of years, hundreds of millions of people have believed in The Devil and his evil, building up fear in their hearts. All that fear and belief in evil radiating out of so many people for so many years has collectively created what today we call "the Devil". So now he really does exist, alive, conscious, and very powerful. And having been built out of fear and evil concepts, those qualities have become the true embodiment of the character he expresses.

This being the case, no one should try to contact The Devil in any form for any reason. Having been created by countless millions, no one person has a chance of being able to control him. There are those who try, realizing the ability to wield so much power would be an incredible feat. But they ultimately fail, often resulting in the “men in white coats” showing up at their door, ready to escort them to their new home behind the strong walls of a mental institute.

Please don't try.

*** THE DRAGON AND THE BEES ***

I went to a Renaissance fair where I spotted a booth filled with ornate blown-glass objects created by the artist manning the booth. I was mesmerized by a glass dragon he must have spent hours creating; it had so many sparkling twists and turns along its many connected ribbons of glass that formed its body

as well as gold highlights on some features. Without a second thought, I bought it from him and took it home.

Later, I privately performed a sex magic ritual to bring my dragon to life. Sex magic is used for "creative" purposes, while blood magic is used when "destructive" energies are needed. So having used "creative" magic to bring my dragon to life, I thought it would help do good things for me and those around me. But I was more than a little wrong. I understand now that, unlike their Chinese counterparts, European dragons have personalities more like vicious guard dogs and have long been used in similar ways for such purposes.

But not knowing better, I innocently placed my dragon on top of the dresser in my room. Before long, an entire hive of honeybees moved into the wall behind the dragon. I could hear them humming away all the time, and some even found a way into my room through a crack in the wall. They acted much like peasants, bowing down before their dragon king. It was kind of intriguing to watch. I tried not to bother them, but still I was stung twice! One sting was on my leg just after I had turned out the light and gone to bed. Then I was stung again a few days later while working at my desk by a bee I had just watched crawl across the floor. When I looked away, he jumped on my foot and stung me! . . . a strategy more commonly used by cats.

I think it is against the law to exterminate honeybees; one is supposed to call a beekeeper to come to remove the bees and add them to his honey-producing collection. But when I made the mistake of telling the landlord about being stung, she called the exterminator against my will and those bees were put to death.

But then another hive of bees moved into the same wall, again right behind the dragon, and again the landlord had them sprayed to death! And actually, it was worse than that: A workman came to do something in the attic and reported that the attic was "full of dead squirrels." "What happened here?" he wanted to know.

I not only felt bad about the bees, but I now felt responsible for all those poor dead squirrels, whom I had always admired. In fact, the happiest person I ever sensed the feelings of was a baby squirrel freshly down from his tree for the first time and crossing the path in front of me. Compare that with what I had just inadvertently caused.

Hoping the dragon's magical life was only connected with me, I washed it for more than an hour in the sink, leaving the water running over it in hopes of washing all the magic away. Then I gave it to a friend who placed it on her Native American altar. But in the night, a whole pack of rats came into her room as she slept, jumped up on her altar, and destroyed a number of meaningful items she'd placed around the dragon. Obviously, my efforts to remove the magic from it had not worked! . . . And there was someone *very* unhappy with me the next day (to put it mildly).

I sadly took the dragon back and asked a medicine woman I was close to what to do. She wasn't very "understanding," either, yelling at me in a truly angry tone of voice, "Don't EVER, EVER give anyone something that's gone magically bad!!! You should have known better than to do something like that!" (And she was right. I should have.)

I reluctantly took the dragon home, dug a deep hole in the back yard, smashed that beautiful dragon into a zillion tiny pieces of sparkling glass using a heavy steel hammer, and then buried it. End of story.

*** SPIRITS LIVING IN YOUR POSESIONS ***

I realize now that my physical possessions can store both energies and living spirits—some helpful to me, but others interfering with my progress toward my goals. These “others” are like extra baggage being dragged along behind me. More importantly, they are sending their own thoughts and feelings into my subconscious, even when I'm not aware of them. That's why off-the-wall thoughts and feelings tend to pop up, making it hard to stay focused on the things that actually matter. My mind isn't causing this problem; the energies and entities living in the "stuff" around me are!

By contrast, I feel such joyous freedom when away in my camper van, as though I don't have a care in the world. For in the van, I'm away from all the old things I've been dragging around with me. In building out my travel van myself, I have infused all the new items with my enthusiasm, all my positive views, my appreciation of others, and more. So those are the qualities that get reflected back to me while I'm there, bringing mental freedom and blissful happiness.

I hope those who read the above will take my words seriously. Please realize you can do a lot toward cleaning up your mind, your feelings, and even your life by just cleaning up the physical environment around you! Get rid of any items that aren't helping you grow, for in so doing, you are cleaning up your spiritual environment as well.

Chapter 6
THE NATIVE AMERICAN WAY

*** LEARNING A NEW PATH ***

A Cheyenne Native American teacher, Thunder, told us that when a person goes into spiritual vision during a sweat ceremony, everyone involved usually goes into vision at the same time along with them. The first time I experienced this, my

"seeing" was in the form of Water Vision (as described above). I had a clear view of the fire where stones for the sweat are heated, for the fire pit was straight across from the sweat lodge door. What I saw in my vision was four Native American men sitting around the fire, one on each of the fire's four sides, all looking outward with their backs to the fire.

The one facing west—and therefore facing me—caught my attention because his mouth was unnaturally wide open and circular. Also, his headband held a circle firmly to the center of his forehead. This circle had designs on it, and I was making a point to remember those designs so I could ask about them later.

As I was studying them, the girl sitting on my right whispered to me that she was "seeing things" and was frightened by it. I quietly explained to her that this was natural and desirable, that she was "going into vision" and seeing things with her spiritual sight like the medicine people in charge do. I told her not to worry because I was "seeing things" too—everyone probably was—and that it means she has the potential to really learn the spiritual side of the Native American way. I also advised that she should talk with the medicine woman about it after the sweat. "Please talk with her," I said, "because she can help you to understand what you're experiencing now and much more for the future. Maybe you can become a medicine woman yourself!" Well, she didn't seem to think I knew what I was talking about and left us right after the sweat, not talking with anyone.

Days later, another Native American teacher held a class in which he taught that the Lakota name for God, Wakan Tanka, actually breaks down into the names of each of the four gods of the four directions: Wah, Kuhn, Tahn, and Kuh, each god having a special purpose and meaning. But at the time of the sweat, I had never heard about this.

On yet another day, I was sitting on a couch with a Native American lady who had studied under a medicine woman named Nadine who always stayed on the reservation. We had time to spare, so on a piece of paper I drew the images I had seen within the circle on the west-facing forehead. She immediately recognized what I had drawn and called it "the medicine wheel," an important Native American symbol used in many ceremonies. The symbol encompasses the meaning of the four gods and their four directions, west being the direction of completion and death, while east is the direction of birth and new life.

Later still, I went to a Native American store and was surprised to see a small stone carving of a man with his mouth unnaturally wide open and circular, just like the man I'd seen facing me in the vision. When I asked about this, I learned from the store owner that the wide-open mouth represents one's spirit leaving the body through the mouth at death. Now it made sense to have seen this mouth on the god facing west during the sweat. He was obviously the god of death whose presence leads to rebirth.

At the time of my vision in the lodge, I had never heard of the four gods, the medicine wheel, or even the four directions, yet these teachings were all there within my vision, ready for me to begin learning about them.

*** HOW SWEAT LODGES HEAL ***

Many people know the sweat lodge is used for healing, but few know anything about the technology that makes it actually work. As a starting point, think of how astral energies become "painted" over objects in the environment when events happen near them, even if those events are simply someone's thoughts and feelings as they pass by. Now attached to objects exposed to these events, these astral "paintings" contain a recording of the events that made them, recordings which some people can actually see, hear, or more often feel within.

That is why hotel rooms where bad things have happened can cause future sleepers to have bad dreams or even wake up with a vision of the past event thinking it's happening now. But all the hotel management needs to do to end the problem is to change the room's color, put in different furnishings, or make whatever changes will make the room distinctively different. After doing so, guests can sleep peacefully in that room again, unaware that anything bad ever happened.

This is because astral energy is like paint. It dries hard after being "sprayed" onto surrounding objects. If the surface of the object it was sprayed onto changes, the "paint" no longer fits the surface of the object and chips into bits, falls off, and blows away, just like hard paint covering a rubber ball does when the ball is squeezed and distorted.

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The same principle applies to sweat lodges used for healing purposes.

The first step in building the fire for the sweat is to use a stick to prayerfully draw a special sacred symbol in the clean, smoothed dirt below where the fire will be made. Correctly drawing this symbol is very important, as it forms the basic foundation for the ceremony to come to fruition. Then the firewood is laid over the symbol and the fire is built.

As the fire burns, the shape, appearance, and structure of the burning wood changes, causing attached energies to no longer fit the form of the wood. They peel off, break apart, and go up in flames and smoke. The wood at that point is like a vacuum, drawing in the astral energies from its surroundings. The stones to be heated for the sweat are placed on top of this wood, becoming the main source from which the wood draws astral energies which in turn go up in smoke. Through this process, the stones are thusly made pure, becoming like vessels

holding nothing.

To prevent the fire and rocks from drawing in astral energy from beyond the area set aside for the sweat, a spiritual wall is first built to protect the area from beyond its boundaries. This is done by first setting up four posts, one at the edge of the sweat area in each of the four directions, with a colored flag atop each whose color represents that direction. Everything inside the area is now considered “sacred,” as the fire draws astral energies away from even the surface of the ground, making everything inside the four posts pure and sacred. All of these preparations help the Indian spirits who are called in to actually build the wall between the four posts, a process which takes about three hours for the land to become clean and the spirit wall to be strong enough to keep outside energies out.

Three hours later, the wall is complete and the rocks are red-hot, ready for the sweat. The medicine person then uses a feather to cut a door in the wall. With that feather still in one hand and sage smoldering within an abalone shell held in the other hand, each person is brushed over with the smoke as they pass through this doorway on their way to the sweat lodge. Once everyone is inside, the feather is again used to close the door in the wall, which is then sealed shut by the spirits.

Then the fire person, using a pair of deer antlers, begins carrying each stone into the sweat lodge. He carries them quickly to reduce the amount of remaining astral energy that might be reabsorbed by the empty vacuum of the rocks. Once dropped into the rock pit surrounded by sweat participants inside the lodge, the vacuum of the rocks then begins to draw astral energies from the surrounding people. Sacred songs—not to be sung elsewhere to avoid their contamination—are sung here by the group amid prayers asking for the healings each person needs. All the while, the "bad stuff" is being invisibly drawn out of the participants by the empty vacuum of the rocks. Many participants have been healed of both mental and physical problems this way.

To help with this process, water from a bucket is splashed over the rocks, causing a large amount of steam to rise. This steam mixes with sweat on the participants, creating a physical link between the stones and the people, enhancing the process of drawing out all the bad energies from the people to the rocks. The floor of the lodge is always dirt; the process happens directly on the earth so as the steam falls to the ground, impurities within it and the rocks can return to the earth to be purified.

When first stepping out of the lodge after a sweat, the feeling of meeting the outside air is wonderful. It's the feeling of all nature touching your purified skin with you ready to begin a new life, free from all that was washed away.

After a sweat, no one needs to take a bath or shower, for heavy sweating and the

steam have already washed the skin. People emerge from the sweat lodge truly clean, in more ways than one.

*** DISTANT THUNDER ***

The first time we were invited to a sweat lodge in East Texas, I was in charge of setting up the fire pit where rocks for the sweat would be heated. As is the tradition, I sprinkled some tobacco in the new pit with a prayer. Then I listened carefully, because in the book *Lame Deer Speaks*, distant thunder was heard as Lame Deer prayed. Sure enough, I heard distant thunder, just like in the book, so in my prayer I invited the Thunder Beings to come join us in our ceremonies.

When they came, they poured down heavy rain. They lit the sky with lightning and shook the air with constant thunder. The medicine woman in charge said she and several others saw a bolt of lightning strike directly into the fire pit where I'd offered the tobacco, spreading rays of lighting just above the ground, one of which passed about a yard in front of her feet! We had three more ceremonies on that same piece of ground during the next few months and every time, the Thunder Beings came, poured their rain to us, and struck a bolt of lightning somewhere on our land.

The ceremonies had not been planned to occur during rain; in fact, each was planned a couple of weeks in advance with hopes for clear skies and sunshine. But each time as the ceremony began, the Thunder Beings came with their rain, lightning, and, of course, thunder. Several people, including the medicine woman, complained that someone must be doing spells against our ceremonies to cause this to happen *every* time.

Maybe I should have explained that I was that person, having invited the Thunder Beings to participate in our ceremonies in the first place with the thought that it would be a good thing, helping us all to be more in tune with the spiritual realm. But I didn't see a benefit in telling them about it at that late date.

*** PRAYER TIES ***

Prayer ties are an important part of many Native American ceremonies. They are made by pinching tobacco between your thumb and index finger while praying something specific, allowing that prayer to go into the tobacco. Then that pinch of tobacco is laid in the center of a piece of cloth about two inches square, the sides of which are then tied together using thread, securing the tobacco inside. A number of prayer ties are made this way, each with a different prayer, and tied along the same thread spaced a couple of inches apart. The power in making prayer ties is that each prayer continues emanating from its tie. A group of ties act as though several people are praying together at the same time, having an

effect far more powerful than if only one person were praying alone.

Eventually, we bought our own property in West Texas at Wizard Wells, where we soon performed a sweat ceremony in which I was given the job of creating the weather prayer ties. Most prayer ties are made with cloth in one of the four colors of the four directions: yellow, black, white, or red. But weather ties are made with gray cloth to represent the gray color of clouds, intended for prayers regarding weather-related needs.

I took my job very seriously, working alone in a separate room. With one tie, I prayed for summer rain, vividly imagining a downpour of rain cleansing both the people and the land and helping to keep things growing even through the dry season. In four other ties, I prayed for the safety of our property. With each one of those four ties, I imagined a different corner of our property being struck by a bolt of lightning, the four strikes together forming a shield of protection over all our land. Lastly, I prayed for myself, imagining myself in a rain forest sitting in front of a gentle stream bubbling over rocks as I sat under a fern gently dripping cleansing rainwater onto my back.

Naturally, I intended for my visual imagery to strengthen the spiritual effect of my prayers. I was making no effort to cause my visual imagery to become physical reality. But . . . .

Soon, everyone's prayer ties were hung from the top of the sweat lodge over the rock pit—the yellow, black, white, and red ones plus my gray ties. It was noontime on a hot summer day. The air was still and the sky totally clear as far as we could see (which wasn't far, due to high hills on all sides). Everyone took their places sitting around the rock pit, and the red-hot rocks were brought in with deer antlers to create the heat for our sweat. The first water was sprinkled from a cup to make the first steam, officially beginning the sweat! It was at that point that a summer thunderstorm quickly rolled in from an unseen location over the hills.

So instead of a normal sweat, every image I'd mentally pictured while placing prayers into the weather ties became our physical reality! (1) Heavy rain—really heavy rain—began falling. (2) Soon, separated by a minute or two, there were four very loud cracks of thunder nearby, which the fire person outside later told us were four lightning bolts that struck each of the four corners of our property. (3) Then, with so much water falling so fast, a stream formed and ran right in through our lodge door, across the ground in front of me, bubbling over the hot rocks as it flowed on its way through and out the back side of the lodge. (4) As I sat, still dry but fully astonished, warm rain water began dripping on the center of my back through a small leak in the lodge roof.

It was all there—everything I'd mentally imaged while making the weather prayer ties. The Indian spirits didn't miss a thing!

The stream of water coming through soon filled the rock pit, completely cooling the rocks, so we had no way to continue the sweat. We then filed out of the lodge, trekked through the rain washing over us, and returned to our main building nearby. Later, I told everyone what I'd done, about the prayers and the imagery placed along with them into the weather prayer ties. No one said a word at the time; they just gave me some really strange looks. But a few days later, one of the medicine woman's students-in-training came to me and said, "Our teacher told us you will never be allowed to make the weather prayer ties again. I hope you understand." Quite a bummer. But in its own way, that's a fitting punishment for what I did.

*** THE HIGH COST OF DISRESPECT ***

Four flags—representing the medicine wheel, its four colors, and the four gods of the four directions—stand on poles around the lodge and fire, marking the edge of the sacred ground on which the ceremony is held. All the ground inside the area marked by the four flags is considered "sacred" during all parts of the ceremony, for impure energies are removed from this land by unseen Indian spirits through the fire during the three hours before the actual sweat begins.

I don't know how they go about it, but during those three hours, the line between flagpoles becomes like an invisible fence that one can actually feel. All those three hours, the spirits are making that "fence" stronger and stronger so that outside energies don't rush in while the rocks are being carried from fire to lodge and everything inside the "fence" is kept pure for the ceremony.

But one time when I was in charge of the fire and the rocks, the medicine-woman-in-training (who was in charge of this sweat) brought two folding chairs and sat down with a close lady friend. They sat down to chat, facing each other with both of their chairs situated right across the line between flagpoles where the spirit wall was being built! That is *so* not allowed! I walked over and pointed out her mistake, asking them to please move. Neither one got up. The medicine woman just looked at me and laughed as she said, "The spirits will understand."

I totally disagreed but said nothing. After all, she was the medicine woman! However, I regret having been so shy and cooperative in those years. I should have insisted they move, warning them that I was quite sure the Indian spirits needed that space to complete their work of building the wall and there would be serious consequences to pay if they didn't respect what the spirits needed. But unfortunately, I was too shy to confront a medicine woman (*shudder*) and walked away without another word.

Not wanting to be involved in the consequences I knew were coming (having seen such things happen before), I refused to enter the sweat lodge that day. I

did continue to fulfill my responsibilities outside the lodge as their fire person, but I participated in nothing more beyond that.

And consequences came indeed: During the sweat, the friend who refused to move fell down unconscious inside the lodge, her face going *splat* right into a thick mud puddle. Outside, right after the sweat, the sister of the medicine-woman-in-training who had always been in charge of the kitchen area went ballistic without any visible cause. No one seemed to understand it, but I knew exactly what was going on, for she voiced exactly what the spirits would naturally have wanted to say. Aiming her words directly at her sister, she yelled, "I have worked for you very hard every time we do this ceremony, but you do NOT appreciate what I do. You do NOT respect my efforts. I might as well not be here! You don't care. I've done all I can to support you and your work. But this is the end. I'm finished."

The friend who had refused to get up could easy wash her face off and move on, as the mistake had not been her responsibility. But the young medicine woman and her sister never made up again. They never shared another sweat or any other important experience together. They remained unable to meaningfully communicate (always quick to misunderstand one another) for the rest of their lives.

In conclusion, I want to say the Native American spirits are wonderfully helpful during ceremonies, but as would be true with anyone in a position of high responsibility over the welfare of others, they *demand* our respect while they do their work. It's not optional, for they are real people, too, not toys to be played with.

*** TENDING THE FIRE ***

The first time I had the job of building and tending the fire for a sweat, it was a miserable experience. I was with a small group of people who assumed I knew what I was doing, but never bothered to ask. In reality, I didn't even know there was a special symbol to be drawn on the ground first before laying even the first piece of wood. I hadn’t yet learned that this symbol on the ground was to become the spiritual foundation for all parts of the ceremony taking place above. Without that symbol, doing the ceremony is a bit like operating a lamp or radio without knowing to plug it into the power socket on the wall.

Without having the proper spiritual protection, the fire felt extremely hot to me. I could hardly get close enough to adjust the logs or set the rocks in place. It burned my skin. In short, it really hurt! I'd run up, do something quickly, and then run back in pain, cussing up a storm. Then I'd realize how wrong it was to cuss at the sacred fire and apologize to it (and the spirits involved), trying hard not to say such things again. The whole experience was far from being anything enjoyable.

****

Not long after that dreadful experience, an advanced medicine woman came to our apartment and spent the entire night, from before sunset until after sunrise, teaching my girlfriend and me the proper way to perform a sweat lodge ceremony. So when my turn to tend the fire came around again, I understood exactly how to start by drawing that symbol in the soil first, doing everything prayerfully, offering tobacco, and then adding the first piece of wood, doing all the steps with focus and in the right order.

It was amazingly different. The biggest difference was the fire didn't burn me—at all. I could stand right up by the flames and even let them wrap around my head, which caused a crackling sound in my ears but didn’t burn a single hair. I also tried an experiment, stretching my arm out with my hand in the center of the flames to see if it would hurt. After a few seconds, it did slowly start to hurt a little, so I pulled back and did not "experiment" like that again, believing that the little pain that had started to surface was a warning not to "play games."

While I was tending this fire, my Cherokee girlfriend walked up to me, then squealed and ran away. I didn't know why. Much later, well after the ceremony had ended, she explained she had wanted to tell me something, and she thought that since I was standing at the edge of the fire that meant she could too. But even though I was closer to the flame than her, the fire was burning her. She had squealed and run away because it hurt. Then she showed me how the fire had burned all the hair off her arm on that side in just those few seconds. Personally, I'm sure it was because she was out of place being there, uninvited and having no spiritually sanctioned role near the fire.

I didn't know there would be lasting effects from correctly working the fire in the ceremony, but for the next year, I was always comfortable. Never too hot, and never too cold. That was a pleasant surprise, because I'd been difficult to please before that, often complaining about needing to turn on more air conditioning in the summer or more heat in the winter. But now, I never asked for a change; regardless of the temperature, it always felt "just right" to me already.

Additionally, during that year when I sat in the circle around the rocks inside the lodge, I didn't sweat. One young medicine woman in charge of a sweat I attended said she'd never seen that before and asked how I managed to stay dry. I pointed out that my chest was wet, but she shook her head and said, "That's from the steam, not sweat," and pointed out that even my shorts were still totally dry.

But my ability to be unaffected by hot or cold temperatures eventually wore off, because I had not taken the role of being the sweat lodge fire person again for quite a long time. After another year, I was back to being affected by hot and cold, the same as anyone else would be.

*** THE PEYOTE CEREMONY ***

Peyote is a cactus used in its own special Native American ceremony for healing. It contains the drug mescaline that is classified as a hallucinogen. As such, it enables the participants to become conscious of their deeper selves, both seeing and interacting with the spiritual side of what's around and within them.

The first time I was invited to a peyote ceremony, I didn't go. I didn't have the right clothing with me to wear. But I wish I had gone anyway, because I missed out on witnessing something amazing. A young woman was there who had an inoperable tumor growing in her brain. The medicine man in charge of the ceremony was able to remove this tumor by magically inserting a hollowed eagle's leg bone through her skull and into her brain (effortlessly, as though inserting a straw into a milkshake) and sucking the tumor out. He then spit it out of his mouth onto the ground and his assistant came with a shovel, scooped it up, and then buried it a distance from the ceremonial area.

I met this girl several times during the following weeks as well as others who had witnessed the tumor being removed. They reported that when the doctors took a new X-ray, they were amazed to find the tumor totally gone, her brain appearing normal as though nothing had ever been wrong.

As you might expect, she fell hopelessly in love with this magical man who had saved her life. They became lovers for a number of months, but eventually he "moved on," leaving her emotionally devastated. Even powerful medicine people are just human with the same frailties and shortcomings as the rest of us.

Sad to have missed something so spectacular, I did attend the next several peyote ceremonies. In one of them, I got to see a similar use of the hollowed eagle's leg bone. A young man had something growing in his back attached to his spine. I watched the medicine man with one end of the bone in his mouth insert the other end into the man's back. I watched the eagle bone move up and down and around as he located and sucked out the offending material and again spit it on the ground for his assistant to scoop up with a shovel and go bury. It really was like watching a straw being moved around in a milkshake, because the movements didn't pull or drag the skin the leg bone had been inserted through at all.

Peyote itself has a terrible, bitter taste. So before the start of one ceremony, I inwardly told myself it was going to taste like pumpkin pie and tried to psych myself up for that taste. I didn't know the girl next to me at the ceremony; my only connection with her was that I had helped her adjust the pillow she had brought with her and placed behind her back to be more comfortable. Then when she took the peyote into her mouth, she exclaimed, "Wow! It tastes just like pumpkin

pie!" Others looked at her strangely with serious doubt. And since I had not said a word about it nor tried to transfer the flavor to anyone else, I wondered how she managed to pick up my intention for a pumpkin pie flavor so completely. Spirit can do marvelous things.

But such transfers of information between participants are not unusual. Often, someone will say something that someone near them was thinking or feeling but that was unrelated to the person who actually put voice to it. I would sometimes have a question in my mind and the medicine man would answer it perfectly within the flow of his discussion during the ceremony. The words intended for me would sound louder that the words he was speaking around them. I thought it remarkable that spiritual forces were somehow able to arrange his words in a way that his natural speaking on other topics could contain exactly the words I needed to hear, at exactly the point in time I needed to hear them, without disrupting the natural flow of his conversation with others in any way.

Peyote also contains substances that cause nausea and throwing up. It is normal for each participant to go far outside to throw up and then return to the ceremony two or three times during the night. But during one ceremony, I did something I clearly should not have—I mentally transferred my nausea to the man on my right so I would not have to go out and throw up. He went out to throw up several times more than others, because he had the nausea and need to throw up for *two* people, while I never did throw up at all that night. Each time he returned, my tummy felt *so* much better.

As I already said, that was completely wrong for me to do. It was totally selfish; it was harming another without their knowledge or permission. I'm now ashamed of myself for having done that, and I only tell the story here for completeness about the kinds of things that are magically possible. I strongly hope no one will attempt to follow me in that kind of dark action. It's just as easy to use that same power to bring good into the lives of others instead, such as sharing the delightful taste of pumpkin pie! Doing good moves your heart further into the spiritual light, bringing happiness for everyone involved, especially the giver of good, while any dark deed, large or small, moves everything that makes up what a person is closer to inner darkness and sadness. It's like a law of cause and effect.

*** THE DRUM CEREMONY ***

Another type of Native American ceremony is performed with a certain kind of drum about two feet across with sides two inches wide and an open back. The drummer stands in the center with all the participants around him lying flat on their backs. The drum is beat hard and loud at an even rate of about one beat per second or slightly faster—the same rate as a healthy heart beat—and does not stop for more than thirty minutes. The beating of this drum sends each participant into their own spiritual vision.

As the ceremony began, I expected to need to focus hard and use my imagination. I started out that way, but soon—and quite suddenly—zoomed into a different landscape that I experienced as though I was asleep and in a vivid dream. But unlike being in a nighttime dream, I still had full conscious awareness and control, indicating I was still wide awake.

I found myself in a jungle clearing where a similar ceremony was taking place. (Prehistoric South America, perhaps?) The participants there believed there was a fully incarnate creature resembling a gargoyle but who had sensitivity in caring for the people. They believed he was right there in the jungle, just a short ways behind the trees they could see.

During the ceremony, music was being played that had four intertwining parts played on four different instruments resembling a stringed harp, bamboo flute, small drum, and a bamboo xylophone. (At least, that's my interpretation of what their sounds were like.) I wanted to remember the complete music, but I soon realized I wouldn't be able to. So I settled for concentrating on one instrument and memorizing its melody.

The next day, I tuned my little zither's strings to those same notes and practiced playing what I'd heard. It really was an interesting sound, wholly different from the twelve-tone scale used universally today.

The next time the group met, I brought my zither with me and explained to them that the whole purpose of the ceremony in the jungle I'd seen was to bring the people together in one united consciousness and purpose for the good of all. It sought to help each member understand through their own experience that spiritually, we are all one, and so we should live, act out, and appreciate that oneness in everything we do each day. Then I played that one instrument's melody from their ceremony on my zither. It was a rather strange sound that had required me to tune the zither with each string a step and a half above the previous string instead of using the modern twelve-tone octave made up of half steps. The group was amazed, much more than I had anticipated. Several asked me to record that lovely music for them, as they wanted to continue to enjoy it at home! I should have done so for them, but I never did.

*** THE SHAPESHIFTER ***

I have long debated including this story, even though it's a big one. I had taken it out and saved it in a separate folder for two reasons. First, this book is about my own experiences. The experiences of others can be found in their own writings. I was there as it all happened, but only as the “go get” person: “Go get us some water bottles,” “Go get some blankets from the car,” “Go see if the children need anything,” etc. As such, I missed out on all the main events! I was hearing

people talk about things as they were happening, but I didn't see or hear these things firsthand due to being away from the main area so much of the time.

The second reason I removed this chapter is because . . . . well, who would believe a pretty young girl even *could* change herself into a large bird and fly over the treetops in the dead of night? Claiming something that unbelievable might cause some readers to assume other parts of what I've written to likewise be fiction.

But today, I'm putting this story back into the book because first off, being the "go get" person and hearing what others were saying WAS my experience. I WAS there, even though only to help. And secondly, I myself am not convinced the shapeshifting incidents really took place. I didn't see them, and what others thought they saw on a very dark night in the forest could very well have been a bit distorted by fear and imagination.

So with that as my disclaimer, I will share the story.

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My girlfriend and I arrived at the forest clearing, opened our folding chairs, and sat down in front of the log fire. Right away, she noticed that a protrusion from a broken-off branch on a burning log looked exactly like the head of a wolf. It was small, but it really did look exactly like a wolf's head, gazing straight toward the two of us. My girlfriend, who was studying to be a medicine woman herself, was notably upset by this, claiming it was a "bad omen," meaning that something sinister was preparing to happen that night. So she quietly began doing magic with prayers, hand movements, and releasing small pinches of tobacco to counter the coming "evil." But I thought the "bad omen" concept to be rather silly and didn't participate with her. Instead, I headed elsewhere to see how I could become helpful.

The ceremony that night was a "vision quest" for several people. Each of the visioners made four strings of prayer ties to lay around the blanket they would sit on for the night, each alone in the forest. The prayers emanating from each of the ties around them would protect them while their consciousnesses slipped into visions to acquire the knowledge or spiritual help each visioner was seeking.

There were two medicine women in charge that night who, about three times before dawn, would go check on each visioner to see if anything was needed. In doing so, they reached the blanket of one girl just in time to see her change into what looked like a large blob of raw hamburger meat that continued changing into what looked like a gigantic black bird. The two medicine women were so frightened by this, they took off running, but then quickly realized they couldn't just run away; they were the ones in charge of everything and responsible for all the people at the ceremony, including this girl. So, they returned but found the

girl's blanket empty.

Leaving one's blanket in itself is totally wrong. Visioners never leave the protection of the prayer ties around their blanket. Everyone knows that, and yet this girl was nowhere to be found.

Back at the main camp, people were talking about the huge black bird that had been flying over the tops of the trees bordering the camp. I wondered how they could tell what it was, what with the night being so totally dark. Did they hear the call of a bird? Was there the sound of large wings flapping? Or perhaps the fire supplied enough light to see it?

I arrived back from one of my errands in time to hear several children arguing with adults, half-shouting in frightened voices, "No! It was a wolf! A real one! And very big!" They exclaimed over each other's voices that it had come to the door of their tent, then stood there, looking in at them. So we assumed the shapeshifter had morphed once again, from a bird to a wolf.

Come dawn as light was returning to the sky, the medicine women went to each of the visioners, still on their blankets, to bring each of them back to the main circle where all were waiting. To their relief, even the shapeshifting girl was back on her blanket, acting as if nothing unusual had happened, so she was brought back to the main circle like the others had been.

We all held hands around the circle as the medicine women prayed and then closed the ceremony. With everyone being respectfully silent, I had no idea that the petite, slim, and very attractive girl holding my right hand in the circle was the shapeshifter! But they later told me, “That was her.” (Oh my gosh!)

After the circle broke, the eldest medicine woman met privately back in the woods with each visioner, one at a time, to discuss the meanings of their experiences. When the shapeshifter's turn came, she said things that perfectly matched the events of the night, such as, “Then it felt like I was in a dream, floating through the sky, looking down on the treetops as I passed over them.”

I totally disagree with how the medicine woman in question responded to hearing these things. She got upset, telling the poor girl that she knew what she was—an evil creature! She ordered the girl to leave immediately and never return! The girl got up, walked to a sparkling new Cadillac, and drove off, presumably never to be seen again.

That seems unreasonably unkind to me. She hadn't tried to hurt anybody. What did she do that had any hint of “evil” in it? Even as a wolf standing in front of the tent door, she had made no attempt to munch down on a small child. So why even think of her as "evil". I did not agree with that assessment at all.

After she left, there were only questions being asked: Who was she? Where did she come from? How does a young girl like that acquire a sparkling new Cadillac and drive it alone into the forest? How did she even know we were having a ceremony here? I was far from being the only one left with a variety of question marks floating around in my head.

So, what REALLY happened in the forest that night? I honestly don't know.

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Weeks later, back in Arlington, TX, I was telling a Wiccan priestess about that night in the forest with a shapeshifter. She totally believed me, saying she'd never seen one shifting with her physical eyes but when watching from the astral plane, she'd witnessed how they first turn into what looks like a lump of hamburger meat—just like I said—before assuming another form. In fact, it was the "hamburger" thing that clued her in that I knew what I was talking about.

When I got home after talking with that priestess, it was midnight with nothing interesting to watch on TV that late. There was no internet yet, and I didn't have cable either, so I settled for an old episode of *Bonanza* that was just starting on broadcast TV.

As so often happens, the TV show fit perfectly what I'd just been thinking and talking about. It was about a girl travelling over the Ponderosa with her gypsy family who didn't even know herself yet that she was a shapeshifter. Unseen in the darkness, she was turning into a wolf on certain nights, howling away deep in the woods. As you might expect the story would go, her family found out and wanted to kill her for being something "evil" instead of human. And of course, Ben Cartwright and his sons came galloping in to the rescue, saving her life.

I would never have guessed the *Bonanza* series had done an episode about shapeshifting. But as so often happens with me, there it was on the TV, right after having been thinking about and talking about it.

Chapter 7

UNEXPLAINED EVENTS

*** TREMENDOUS FLASH OF LIGHT ***

In 1959, we lived in a house that had been built in the mid-1920s. A chandelier with hundreds of crystals hung at the top of the staircase. One night shortly after bedtime, there was a tremendously bright flash of light. I instantly covered my ears, expecting a super loud crack of thunder to follow because the only time I'd seen a flash that bright before was at another house when lightning struck right

outside the window I was looking through. But no thunder ever came this time.

I took my hands off my ears and then realized there had been no flash of light from outside the windows, only through the doorway to the hall, lighting up the wall next to the windows. What could it have been?

Some weeks later, I was sitting at my desk in the next room over and the flash occurred again, lighting up the wall in front of me without a sound. So now I could triangulate where the flash had come from. I stood against the wall in the center of where the flash had lit up the wall and looked out through the doorway. Centered in the doorway, I saw the chandelier that hung in the center of the hall. Then I went to the first room where I'd seen the flash weeks before, and again I stood against the wall in the center of where the flash had hit; again, it was the chandelier I saw centered through the doorway. Obviously, the light had come from the chandelier. But how?

I walked over to the wall switch and turned on the light bulb in the chandelier. It was a single 60-watt bulb, which didn't seem bright at all compared with the sunlight already coming through the windows. I went back into the room to examine the wall where I had just seen the flash and realized I could not see any difference being made by that 60-watt bulb, not even along the edges of where the light should be shining. So I concluded the flash had not come from a light bulb.

A few weeks later, there was a third flash, but even though I was right there playing on the floor of the same room behind the door to the hallway, the door was closed so I didn't see the flash. It was my mother who saw it from downstairs and yelled up to me in a frightened tone of voice, sounding panicked. Our conversation went like this:

"Tommy! What are you doing?! What was that light?"

I got up, opened the door, and walked to the stair railing. Looking down, I asked her, "What light?"

"Are you playing with something electrical?"

"No."

"Well there was a TREMENDOUS flash of blue light, and it came from upstairs. Are you sure you're not playing with something electrical?"

"No, I'm not. And I've seen that light too. Twice. It comes from the chandelier but is much brighter than the lightbulb. I don't know what makes it. I wish I had seen it this time, too, but my door was shut, so I missed it."

I loved living in that wonderful old house, but to my dismay, my parents sold it a few weeks later. Before we moved out, my mother took all the crystals off that chandelier and placed them in a box; but unexplainably, she didn't save the rest of the chandelier along with the crystals. The house was then torn down, as planned, and a new apartment building was soon erected in its place. I still feel

so sad when I think about the loss of that house; I have never felt really at home anywhere else. That house was my home, and it always will be.

I still have the box of crystals from that chandelier, still in the same cardboard box my mother placed them in in 1960. It is sitting now in the window in front of me, only two feet from my knees. But in spite of getting both direct and indirect sunlight, I have never seen another flash of light, even though it's now sixty-two years later! Nor am I aware of there ever having been a flash during the twenty-seven years before I first saw one and covered my ears.

The flashes may not have come from the glass at all but from the surface of the metal frame. My father had been a heavy smoker, and his smoke deposits are heavy on those crystals still today. I think the flash most likely came from an extremely rare chemistry that formed amid the smoke deposits, which could have been either on the glass or on the metal I no longer have. To be so bright, it would have to be something akin to the “superconductors” in which electrons can circulate with absolutely no resistance, building up tremendous energies in a loop so small as to not yet be discovered. In any case, the flash of light is still a mystery that will probably never be solved.

But our old chandelier is not the only place such flashes have been seen. Not knowing about my experience, the brother of a campground owner where we once stayed told me about having a crystal at home that every once in a long while emits a single very bright blue flash. And so the phenomenon continues!

*** WATER TO CONCRETE ***

When I was six years old, I was playing on the back patio with my small water gun. It was near noon on a hot summer day. The sun beating down on the cement patio had made it hot, so the water from my water gun evaporated quickly. I decided I wanted to know if water from my gun could leave a mark on cement after evaporation, so I picked an area that was smooth, flat, and all the same color and shot two little squirts there. Then I kept my eyes on them until they evaporated so I would not lose track of where they had been.

Soon, the silver sparkle from the sun on them disappeared, which I knew meant the water had evaporated, but both drops were still there. I got down on my hands and knees to examine them and found the water had turned into hard, dried concrete like the rest of the patio, but they were still standing up in the shape of the original water. I tried scratching them off but couldn't. They were totally hard.

Still down on my hands and knees, I let two more drops of water fall an inch away so that I could watch close up how this transformation happened. But they only evaporated, leaving no mark at all. So I let a couple more drops fall directly on

top of the original drops, which ran down either side. But again, the new drops only evaporated, not leaving any observable mark.

But those two original squirts—one more rounded and the other long and bent to the left, exactly as I'd seen them fall from my water gun—were still there, unchanged, when we moved away from that house three and a half years later.

Until two years ago, I never doubted the water had changed into cement, but with an understanding of the extreme nuclear power of the strong and weak forces within the nucleus of an atom, I started doubting any force, spiritual or physical, would or even could rearrange each of at least 10^{21} atoms, defying those forces in all those places to change water into cement.

But as so often happens in my life, the TV came to the rescue just five days later and provided the answer as to how it can be magically done. I had turned on Netflix and found a documentary about the famous Scole Experiment (you can find a wide variety of books and films about it) where similar "transmutations" took place before the eyes and in the hands of scientists trying unsuccessfully to disprove their validity. The spirits involved in those experiments explained that they did not transmute any atoms from one type to another. Instead, they simply moved existing substances through time/space from one location to another, taking them from locations where they would never be missed.

Finally, I had an explanation that made sense! My water did not change into cement; the water evaporated, as I saw, and cement was moved through time/space from another location to perfectly fill the space where the water had been.

I'm sure someone from the spiritual realm gave me that experience so that I would forever know such things are possible. But it is also true that at six years old, I had not yet been "entangled" with anyone else's beliefs about such things. Likewise, I had not yet been entangled with any concepts about molecules or physics in general. Therefore, my experience did not have to follow known laws of physics at that time. But the moment I began trying to study what I had done in order to figure it out, the entanglements began, making the event unrepeatable.

But I wasn't the only one who had this experience! I was at our weekly get-together with friends at their apartment (all people whom I'd never said a word to about my cement experience), and I was really surprised when the lady who lived there told us all how when she was six years old, the same age as me, she had been pretending to make concrete out of mud and water, and then it actually turned into real concrete! She thought she had discovered a new way to make concrete everyone could use in the future, but even she was never able to repeat the experience.

After that, I told her my experience but saw doubt in her eyes. Of course, it likely

sounded as though I was just copying what she'd said, it being such an unusual thing for either of us to have done. But I'm still glad she told her story first so that I would know she was for real, not just copying my words. It’s reassuring when others experience the same things I do.

The house where my water turned into cement on the patio was also torn down. This time, it was decimated to build the Mormon temple that stands there today on Willow Lane in Dallas, Texas. We toured the temple when it was first built, and through a glass window in the hallway, I saw a large pit in an adjacent room with life-size statues of bulls facing outward from the center of the pit in the different directions, reminiscent of the four Native American gods I saw likewise facing outward around the fire at a sweat. Could both have originated from the same original teachings?

My guess is the pit was later filled with water for baptism and similar ceremonies, especially since the bulls and pit were all painted swimming-pool blue, but it's only my guess. What I do know is that the pit was either on or very near the spot where my water had turned to concrete! So I suspect that the fact that the spot was later going to be used for very magical ceremonies may well have provided the boost—through time and space—that allowed my experience of seeing water change to concrete years earlier.

Chapter 8

AS SEEN ON TV

Sometimes magic is not a single event that soon ends but instead becomes a change in your reality that repeats itself or continues for a very long time, even years. A good example for me is the fact that if I talk about something—or even just strongly think about it—I will very likely see it on TV right away or within a couple of days. This phenomenon has only grown stronger over the years, and here are some examples.

*** FROM NEW YORK TO CALIFORNIA ***

As my girlfriend and I rode home in our car, I told her about the book *Walk Across America*. It's the story of a young man who walked all the way from New York to California and wrote down his journey. Then, that same evening, we turned on the TV to watch *The Tonight Show*. It was Conan O'Brien's very first night to host the show, and the show began with a skit about him still in his New York City home where he had been doing his TV show for ages. Suddenly, he remembers his new job at *The Tonight Show* is in California, not New York, so he takes off running across America on foot! There are scenes of him running as fast as he can past a number of famous American locations, such as the iconic St. Louis Gateway Arch. Finally, he runs into *The Tonight Show* studio in California, out of

breath but ready to start the show.

Most examples out of the hundreds I’ ve had are quite small, such as the following three.

*** 1: BAMBI ***

One day I had told my girlfriend about the movie *Bambi*, especially about the cute baby skunk saying to Bambi, "You can call me Flower, if you want to." Later, I walked past the TV just as the baby skunk was saying those words to Bambi! I stopped to see if they were actually showing the Bambi movie on TV, but they were not. Rather, it was an "Only you can prevent forest fires" commercial in which they'd used that scene from *Bambi* instead of the usual Smokey Bear.

*** 2: KING SOLOMON AND THE CHILD ***

In another instance, I had told my girlfriend about the story of King Solomon and the two mothers both claiming the same baby. Only minutes later, we passed her brother's TV. He was watching a movie, and as we passed, there was a scene with one mother crouching over a baby and the guard holding his axe high in the air.

*** 3: THE ONE THING ***

On the phone one day, my brother told me that the only meaningful takeaway from the *City Slickers* movie was the scene about "the one thing."* I didn't turn on the TV until the next day, but as the picture slowly lit up, there were two cowboys riding side by side on horseback. I watched intently, wondering if it could be what my brother had just told me about, and sure enough, the first words spoken were the start of the story about the one thing told in full. You can see that scene on YouTube with the title: City Slickers One Thing - The Secret of Life - Full HD

*** TIGERS! TIGERS! AND MORE TIGERS! ***

I tried repeatedly—for months, actually—to get my girlfriend to recognize the magic of seeing her thoughts on TV, but she always said it was a “coincidence” when it happened and was getting a little annoyed with me over my endless examples. So one day I said, "Ok, I'll show you it's not a coincidence. Just think strongly of a tiger, how you are afraid of tigers, and I guarantee that you'll see a real live tiger on TV within twenty-four hours." Well, the next afternoon, we were

* https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xtrQUoRJ_W4&ab_channel=BerntEidsmoe

sitting together in front of the TV and her brother was on the couch with the remote control.

First, we saw a commercial about Tiger Woods, with a real-life tiger sitting beside him on the golf course.
That commercial ended as another began in which a real tiger was running down the road chasing a car. When it caught up with the car, it turned into a cartoon tiger and jumped into the gas tank. As that commercial ended, her brother switched to another channel where yet another commercial was just beginning that showed a box truck backing up to the gate of a prison yard. When they opened the truck, out jumped about eight real tigers who immediately started chasing the prisoners across the yard. As they were desperately climbing the fences to escape the tigers, the announcer asked, "How strong is your antiperspirant?"

When that third commercial ended, the regular show returned. I confidently turned to Diem and said, "See? Now you've got to believe me." But instead of the reaction I had hoped for, she looked down at the floor in front of her and said in a quiet voice, almost inaudible, "I don't want to talk about it." That's all she said—just "I don't want to talk about it."

I think I made the wrong choice, choosing something she was very afraid of to show her on the TV, but I thought the energy of her fear of tigers would make the TV's response more certain. Maybe it did, but the price was too high, having the wrong effect on her. But at least she has never used the word "coincidence" again—not even once, about anything.

*** DRAGON IN THE ROOM ***

To me, the most outstanding example is the time I twisted a long green balloon into a dragon on a two-foot stick for Diem’s four-year-old nephew at his house. When we sat down at the table to eat, I was in a chair facing the TV, and unfortunately Diem was on the opposite side with her back to the TV. As we started to eat, the young nephew began running around the room with his dragon on a stick, flying it through the air above him. As he did so, a cartoon came on the TV for children in which there was a similar green dragon flying around in a room. It was long and skinny just like the balloon dragon I'd made. As Diem's nephew ran around the room with his balloon, the cartoon dragon zipped around his cartoon room in the same manner and equally high up. I was truly astonished. There were chicken drumsticks on my plate, and I picked up one and took a bite. Right after I did so, the dragon in the cartoon reached down somewhere below the screen and picked up a drumstick and took a bite just as I had. I sat my drumstick down; he sat his down. I picked it up again and took a second bite, right after which he picked up his drum stick and took a second bite as well.

All the time this was happening, I kept calling softly to Diem, not wanting to disturb the other adults at the table, "Diem! Look at the TV! You won't believe it if you don't look! Diem! Look! Please look!" But she only answered with annoyance that she was NOT going to turn her chair around, and she was NOT going to twist her back or neck either! (How frustrating for me.) Plenty of people in the room could have seen it. There were a number of adults chatting together along with kids playing in the room, but no one else was paying attention to the TV, only me. I alone got to see the whole thing.

*** STANDING IN THE FIRE ***

While I was writing the part of this book about being one with the bonfire at the Native American ceremony without being burned, Diem asked me what I was writing about and I told her. Perhaps three hours later, I was watching the final episode of *Good Omens* on Amazon Prime and was astonished to see at minute 43:10 an angel enter a raging bonfire and stand in the middle of it without being burned, just smiling.

I called Diem to come see this, backed up the video, and replayed that scene. She saw, understood, gave me a brief look that implied "How totally boring," then turned away and left. *sigh*

*** KRAFT MAYO ***

Not long after the *Good Omens* incident, I felt hungry, so stopped typing in order to open the jar of Kraft mayo that was sitting beside me at the computer. As I was unscrewing the lid, a video ad began playing in which a jar of Kraft mayo was opening itself close-up on the screen, the jar in my hands almost touching the one in the ad. Well, maybe I should have just sighed and muttered, "How boring," and headed to the kitchen for some whole wheat bread.

*** ALL OF THEM SAW THINGS OTHERS COULDN'T SEE ***

I signed up as a client at the school of social work at the local college to receive some help deciding how to solve some personal problems and prepare for the future. The first thing they wanted was for me to fill out a number of paper forms, which I did. One of them contained the question, "Do you ever see things on TV that others don't see, or hear voices that others don't hear?" Of course, I answered "Yes." To do otherwise would be lying, voiding the whole concept of getting honest help. But then I worried they would think I was crazy, delusional, or worse. For days, I worried about how to fix it. How could I show them the truth? How could I communicate to them the reality of it, letting them know it’s not just my imagination?

A couple of hours before our first session a week later, they called to let me know my appointment had to be cancelled but they'd see me at the same time the following week.

With nothing else I needed to do at the time of the canceled appointment, I sat down to watch a movie on Netflix instead, still wondering how to show them the truth about the TV showing me things. I chose a new movie I'd never seen, the 2012 movie titled *Branded*. It began with a black screen on which names slowly appeared.

They were: Joan of Arc, Johann Wolfgang Von Goethe, Teresa of Avila, John Forbes Nash, Alexander the Great, Socrates, Heinrich Julius, Schliemann Emanuel Swedenborg, Francis Goya, George Gurdjieff, Julius Caesar, Niels Bohr, Daniil Andreev, Carl Jung, Meister Eckhart, Mohandas KaramChand Gandhi, and Rudolf Steiner.

Then the names faded out and were slowly replaced with these three lines, one at a time:

"All of these unusual people heard a voice.

All of them saw things others couldn't see.

All of them changed the world."

WOW! I had just been given the exact "proof" I needed to show I'm not crazy. It had even happened at the start of our official appointment hour! The phenomenon of my thoughts and needs popping up on TV had worked once again, giving the exact answer I needed at that moment. I backed up the movie and took screenshots of those names and lines so I that could show them on paper at our next session.

But when the time came a week later, the girl said she didn't care about that at all—no problem. She just wanted to get right into the problem-solving I'd signed up for, which we did. Whew!

Chapter 9

MEANINGFUL DREAMS

*** BECOMING SOMEONE ELSE ***

A metaphysical teacher once gave me a rather amazing technique for learning from dreams. She said that when I first wake up from a dream and remember it

well, to close my eyes and try remembering the dream from the viewpoint of one of the other characters in the dream. Remember the dream again, but from their point of view.

I tried this the very next morning and the results were truly astonishing. I had just woken up from a dream in which I was admiring a lovely view from a balcony on top of a high mountain. As I was there enjoying the scenery, several men in black clothing rode up to the base of the mountain on horseback and used ropes to pull me and the balcony down to the base of the mountain. I felt so sad, wondering why anyone would want to destroy a place so lovely with its perfect view.

So I closed my eyes and imagined being one of those horsemen dressed in black. To my delight, it worked! I remembered the whole dream over again from the horseman's point of view, not as though I was making it up, but in the same way and just as clearly as I had first remembered the dream. As him, I experienced that he was finding emotional delight in seeing the balcony fall from atop the mountain.

Then I realized it was the same "delight" I had experienced myself in other dreams, such as one in which I watched a train jump its tracks while crossing a high bridge between mountains and come tumbling down to the valley below. I had enjoyed that! So evidently the man on the horse had also been me, the same “me” that enjoyed seeing the train fall. They were two different parts of the same person, both of them me. One “me” enjoying the beauty of the height, and the other “me” enjoying bringing it all down.

Not only did this teach me dreams are truly multidimensional, experienced in different ways by different parts of the dreamer, but it also taught me that one part of the dreamer can truly "upset the apple cart," as it were, spoiling the happiness felt by another part of the same dreamer. How great it would be if these "parts" could communicate, finding mutual goals where both could be happy with the shared results they create in the dream and perhaps do likewise in the physical world.

The next time I tried this technique was when I woke from a dream in which my mother had been saying things to me that didn't seem to make sense. I had listened and tried, but I just couldn't understand where she could be coming from or what the point was behind her strange statements. So I closed my eyes and re-entered the dream, remembering it from my mother's point of view. Again, the technique worked perfectly—my mother's words immediately made perfect sense. I now grasped exactly what she'd been trying to tell me and why it mattered to her. Better yet, as my mother, I saw concepts and attitudes in her that I had not known were there, things I believe to be real about my mother that I didn't know until I experienced them from her viewpoint in the dream.

*** DANCING UPSIDE DOWN ***

About age fifteen, I had been sick and my mother woke me up around three a.m. to give me my medicine. In doing so, she woke me out of an unusually bright and colorful dream of a girl who was right in front of me dancing upside down.

This had seemed so unusual, I described it to my brother and mother on the way home from school the following day: How the girl had blonde hair rolled up on the back of her head. How the wall behind her was lit up bright blue as though it was made of blue plastic with bright lightbulbs inside of it. How it was only her head and chest I could see, close up in front of me. And that the most unusual feature was that she was dancing upside down, as though standing on her head! I also told them there was a white squiggly line about the width and length of a pencil moving to the left below her head.

Then we went inside, sat down in front of the TV, and turned it on. When the TV warmed up, there was the girl, EXACTLY the girl I'd seen in the dream as I had described to my mother and brother. It was a live TV show, not prerecorded, so no one could have known in advance what would be done or seen, and with the studio's special effects equipment, she was then shown upside down, just her head and chest displayed. The bright blue "plastic" I had described was the color of the wall behind her, and it seemed lit up blue from within because the color on our old-school color TV was turned up too far, creating an effect like a blue lightbulb inside. Then came the final touch: A news bulletin came scrolling across the screen, forming the white squiggly line I'd described to them moving toward the left below her head.

Obviously, I'd seen the future, in precise detail. Every detail was exactly correct. But even my mother and brother refused to believe me. They refused to believe it possible for anyone to see the future. My mother insisted it had to be something similar by coincidence and I just *thought* it was exactly the same. Had they seen both my dream and compared it to the TV image, there is no way they could have denied they were identical. But my mother was not paying attention to the TV, and of course neither had seen my dream. They only had my word to go on, and that was not enough.

But it was certainly enough for me. Even her spontaneous dance moves were all exactly the same as in the dream. Obviously, the future does fully exist already in some form, complete enough to be seen accurately in full detail. This was a fantastic eye-opener for me about the nature of reality. There was no way I could ever forget it.

It now seems obvious to me that the future already exists in every detail, and yet it is also clear we still have our freedom to choose and do whatever we want in that future, even though it is already complete. The proof is that we are choosing and doing as we wish today, even though today must have already existed

millennia ago.

I was riding home a few years ago while listening to a particularly intriguing episode of *"Radiolab/WNYC Studios"* on my car radio. In this podcast an artist and a physicist were being interviewed, both of them claiming the future already exists and that time is only an illusion. The episode is titled "Beyond Time" (and elsewhere titled "A Simpler Time"). At moment 22:20 the artist David McDermott of Dublin Ireland explains:

Time is here, has always been here, and always will be here. In other words, this moment in time that we're experiencing has always been here and always will be. That this moment in time, as you're listening now, on the radio, as my voice comes across the wireless, this is a permanent fixture of the universe. That I've always spoken on the radio, and I always will speak on the radio, and you will always be listening, and you always have been listening. Do you understand the concept?*

Ha! Yes, I get it. I also get that it's not only the TV that works for me. And I get it that I'm not alone in my viewpoint, for truly great minds agree with me, even though my family did not.

*** TIRES ROLLING DOWN A HILL ***

When I was in the sixth grade and twelve years old, I had just gone to bed when the thought came to me that I could look in on someone else who was already asleep and see what they were dreaming. I'd never done that before—or since, actually—but I just knew I could.

I closed my eyes and saw someone dreaming that a baseball player was on top of a tall hill, striking baseballs with a bat, one after another. Then the dream changed to tires rolling down that same hill. Then the dream changed again to metal car parts (like bumpers and fenders) crashing into each other at a high speed, bending all out of shape from the impact. That startled the dreamer, waking him up. Satisfied by that experience, I stopped thinking about anything and let myself fall asleep.

The next day at school during lunch, I was telling the boys around me at the table about the dream I had watched when the boy straight across from me at the table announced, "That was *my* dream!" I had only told them about the first and last part of the dream, because my mind was somehow being blocked from remembering the middle part about the tires. So I tested him by asking about the middle part. "Tires rolling down a hill," he quickly and confidently responded.

* Permission to quote granted by **Andy Lanset** at WYNC New York Public Radio.

Then I also remembered that part clearly and fully, and knew he was exactly right; it really had been his dream!

There are several things about this event that I find more amazing than just seeing someone else's dream: (1) It could have been anyone's dream in the whole world. So how was the future known well enough for me to see the dream of the specific boy I'd be sitting across the table from the next day when I first told anyone about the dream? The boy was not someone in my class nor even someone I liked, nor do I remember sitting at the table with him on any other occasion. (2) Who made me temporarily forget the middle part so that I'd have the boy's recollection as proof it really was his dream?

Obviously, someone from the spiritual realm had it all planned out as a learning experience well before the event, teaching me what is possible.

*** DREAMING THE FUTURE TOGETHER ***

One morning, I woke up at the same time as my girlfriend. I mentioned dreaming we were in an old hotel. She was quick to ask me to tell her more about it, because she had just awoken from the same dream!

We compared notes: I asked her why I never saw her there until the second half of the dream, and she answered that she spent the first half of her dream driving around Dallas looking for the place, stating, “I had no idea you were going to stick it way out in the country.” I asked her why, when she got out of her car and I waved to her from the roof where I and others were working, she didn't wave back. She answered that she saw the men working on the roof but didn't know I was one of them nor did she see anyone wave to her. I asked who that slim girl with very long black hair was who got out of the passenger side of her car. She looked at me with true astonishment, then exclaimed, "That was my best friend from Oklahoma whom you've never met!" In my dream, the girl had later come up to me alone to shake my hand, introducing herself as my girlfriend's close friend.

My girlfriend asked me questions as well about things I had not yet mentioned, such as that a number of rooms had no Sheetrock on the walls between them, only the 2X4 wood framing, allowing us to walk through those walls between rooms. This was one of several proofs she really did share the same dream.

More than a year later, she and I actually found that hotel, bought it, and moved in! And yes, there was no Sheetrock on the walls between rooms on the second and third floors, allowing us to walk through the walls from room to room. They had never been finished. Also, I later actually sat on the exact spot of the roof from where I'd waved to her when she got out of her car in the dream. I was up there because it was the best spot for drying items in the sun. But in real life, I was totally alone; no workmen were beside me nor was anyone below near the

street.

Sharing dreams with someone isn't a rare occurrence. There is a book on the subject titled *Mutual Dreaming: When Two or More People Share the Same Dream* that contains over two hundred accounts from others who have had a similar experience.

Chapter 10

THE CONSCIOUS LIFE OF TREES

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When I was two, I thought trees were as alive and conscious of everything as we are. I observed that before a small breeze begins to blow, the tallest tree around would wave its highest branches first. That tree was clearly the leader since a second or two later, the other trees—watching him—would follow his lead and begin waving their branches back and forth as well. Clearly, this action was what makes the wind blow, for only a few seconds after that, I would feel the breeze they were creating blowing gently across my face.

All this wasn't literally true, of course, but it was the beginning of my view that trees are truly alive, another kind of "people" not so different from the animals that live within their forests, not so different from even us.

*** LITTLE MAN IN THE TREE ***

One day soon after I'd turned three, while playing in the back yard of our home, I found a flat metal object shaped like a church window that was about an inch tall. It was flat across the bottom with sides that went straight up until they curved gently to a point at the top, giving it that "church window" look. It also had crossbeams curved at the top like those that would hold stained glass in a church window. The four prongs on the backside were clearly meant to pin it to something.

I felt as though it was a door to a spiritual world and took my little "church window" to my favorite oak tree and stuck it to the trunk, level with my eyes. It then seemed like a door to someone, a spirit living inside my tree. The experience felt so real. I spent a part of many days standing there, talking with my friend in the tree. Wishing I could be supportive to him, I often found tiny seeds and placed them inside the tiny doorway. The next day, those seeds would be gone and I imagined he had eaten them. Naturally, I went and found more.

While I was six years old, nearly four years later, we moved to another house. I didn't want to leave my tree friend behind and prepared an empty cigar box to

transport him in. I laid bits of the tree in the box to make him comfortable along the way (bark? leaves? twigs? I don't remember exactly). Then I held the open box up to the tree door and asked him to hop in. Naturally, I then peeled his door, this little metal church window, off his bark and placed it in the box as well, then closed the box.

As I sat in the back seat of the car, I held the box firmly in my lap all the way. Once there, I found the most appropriate-looking tree, opened the box, stuck the tiny door to the bark of the trunk of the new tree, and asked him to hop in. To my deep disappointment, nothing happened after that. He wasn't there. No amount of wishing, asking, hoping, or imagining could make him feel real again. He simply wasn't there. So that event marked the end of three years of sharing joyfully with my special friend who I now believe was real, the living spirit of that oak tree.

*** TREE EMOTIONS ***

As children, my brother and I were playing in my grandmother's front yard one day when we discovered that if we hugged a tree, we could feel a specific emotion from each individual tree. We verified it was real by taking turns hugging the same tree and then comparing notes. The wording was often a little different between me and my brother, but we were clearly getting the same emotion from any given tree.

Then I hugged the tree right next to the driveway and found that, unlike the other trees, it was filled with a mixture of all kinds of emotions. After some thought, I deduced that because it was right next to the driveway on the left side, it had picked up whatever emotion the driver was feeling when they passed by the tree on their way to Grandmother's house. From that, I concluded that all the trees were not expressing their own emotions, but rather the emotions of someone who had been near them.

Later at home, my brother tried the hugging technique on a well-used pair of pliers and was surprised to feel nothing from it at all. Evidently, only living things such as trees can do this, receiving and giving emotions from and to others.

*** THE LUMBERJACK ***

While living on the edge of Olympic National Park, my next-door neighbor was hired on as a lumberjack to help log the trees from the hill right above our homes. I thought I might like helping as well, so in the afternoon, I started climbing the hill on foot toward where my neighbor was working. The climb took considerably longer than I thought, so by the time I got there, everyone had just left for the day. It was just me and the many tree stumps remaining at the top of the hill.

To my surprise and distress, I felt a lot of pain and sadness on that hill. Where was it coming from? I couldn't tell, but it was all over the hill where the trees had been removed that day. Could it be the ghosts of the trees? Spirits (fairies) who had been living in the trees? Small animals? I didn't see any animals, though. Or maybe from the tree stumps left behind? I really couldn't tell where it was coming from, but I knew the suffering was very real. As a result, I knew right then that I would NEVER want to work as a lumberjack or want any involvement with the removal of forest.

Now, years later—just this week, in fact—I watched a documentary on Amazon Prime titled *Intelligent Trees*. It was about how with modern scientific equipment and methods, they have learned that via chemicals and electrical impulses, trees do in fact communicate with each other. This communication is accomplished through their root systems, both root to root and with the help of connecting fungi strands that act as messengers. They do some impressively intelligent things. Here are a few examples:
(1) Trees will notify other trees when under a bug attack so other trees can modify their chemistry to fight the attack if it reaches them.
(2) Trees will support a nearby struggling tree by sending it sugar and other nutrients through their roots.
(3) Tree stumps are often kept alive years after the tree above is gone, as other trees will continue to feed it, keeping it healthy.
(4) Trees grow their branches away from spaces neighboring trees will need for sunlight.
(5) Trees care for their young, both by sending nutrients through roots to them and by choosing which "children" to favor as having the best chance to reach maturity.
(6) Trees need community and don't do nearly as well if they don't have other trees around to communicate with.

The documentary also explained that with modern testing equipment, they've discovered that the vast root system interconnecting trees works much like our brains do, similarly making use of both electrical pulses and biochemistry. It said there is now every reason to believe these underground "brains" ave both thoughts and emotions, as some of the chemistry is the same as our own brains.

This perfectly explains the pain I felt all over the hill where the trees had been removed that same day. The pain was coming from the many tree “brains” left underground, brains who were mourning the loss of their “bodies” above. And that's really sad.

Chapter 11
CREATE YOUR OWN MAGIC

*** YOUR BELIEF BECOMES YOUR EXPERIENCE ***

There is no “right way” or “wrong way” to do magic. Magic remains alive and well, continuing to do its own thing behind the scenes no matter how you choose to relate to it. What matters most is what you think, feel, and believe about it, as these qualities are what give magic its direction for what to create and how to perform in your life.

Magic itself is not a person. It won't tap you on the shoulder to point out mistakes or make exceptions for you. Instead, magic is very much like the laws of physics in that it also has a set of laws that always work the same for everyone everywhere and cannot be violated. This is because magic is actually a much deeper level of the same physics we all know, but where even consciousness itself is a part of physics, magic interacts with all the other parts in ways not yet commonly understood.

The difference between regular physics and magic can be compared to how Newton's third law of motion states "what goes up must come down." This law of physics seemingly makes it “magic” that we can now send up spaceships that leave our solar system behind completely, never “coming down” again. Yet these space ships aren't breaking the laws of physics; they are simply fulfilling those laws on a deeper level beyond what Newton ever envisioned.

Because consciousness itself is an inseparable part of physics on the deeper level we call “magic,” affecting and being affected by every other part of physics, believing magic does not exist will result in magic going out of its way to prove to you it does not exist, probably doing so for the rest of your life. But if you believe in it and embrace that belief, looking past the fears and mental blocks that hold most people back, magic will open doors and windows all around you, letting the songs of life flow in and through you, ready to show you all you could ever hope to see or experience and lead the way in whichever direction you choose to go.

*** TAPPING INTO THE POWER OF ANCIENT MAGIC ***

You are not alone in your process of using magic; others are deeply influencing the results your magical efforts achieve. This is because the scientifically proven theory of “quantum entanglement” (Einstein's "spooky action at a distance") is actually a set of physical laws on the level of magic, fully active in everything we do. When you use magic from a source others have also used, it is "entangled" with them, influenced by their thoughts, feelings, and beliefs in addition to your own. Therefore, some ancient magics have become very powerful since they have been practiced many times and by many people over a very long period of time.

An excellent example of such a well-developed magic is what has been named 鏡he Lesser Banishing Ritual of the Pentagram. As a current online article puts it, this ritual has had a HUGE influence on modern paganism and witchcraft in a number of ways,* yet its origins and even how it should be used are unclear. Some historians claim it came from ancient times at the beginning of recorded history, while others claim it to be a fairly modern invention of the Golden Dawn founded in 1887 using bits and pieces taken from ancient concepts. With the same ambiguity, some claim its powers extend only to the life of the person performing it, while others claim it is useful in everything from house cleansing to exorcisms.

In any case, I have used it a number of times with total success extending well beyond my immediate self.

One time, a friend's new office had offensive energies that negatively affected their customers. After everyone went home, I performed this ritual twice in each room of the office. The very next day, people were asking, “What's different? What did you change? It feels so light and airy in here now; I feel much more happy and free.”

Another time, my next-door neighbor fell suddenly unconscious twice only a few weeks apart. Both times, the paramedics were called but could not detect a reason for it happening. With permission, I went in and walked to the back. When I did, I felt sure there was a “problem spirit” living back there in something, drinking the poor man's energy and causing odd emotional upsets in his family. So later when everyone was away (and with their permission), I performed this ritual twice in each room. After that, no more problems—even the emotional upsets between family members ceased. I never heard about another fall or anything else of an “evil” nature happening there again.

That apartment's residents knew nothing about this ritual, which is why I waited until everyone was out and I was alone. It is important to avoid any conflict with others’ thoughts, feelings, and beliefs and the “fear of the unknown” that would naturally result. The residents only knew I was there to help, so the experience of being helped was what they received.

I could give more examples of rituals and techniques, such as hands-on healing which I've found to give fast and marvelous results or magic through a crystal which I used to bring my father’s hand that had swollen up like a balloon back to total normality in about five minutes. But the principles that make any magic work are always the same as I here explained regarding the Lesser Banishing Ritual of

* https://www.patheos.com/blogs/teaaddictedwitch/2019/07/who-really-gives-a-crap-about-the-lbrp-anyway/

the Pentagram. Making it work is not about getting the words or movements exactly right, but rather being deeply in tune with your deepest inner thoughts/feelings/beliefs, consistent with the thoughts/feelings/beliefs of those who connected with the same system of magic before you.

*** THE LAW OF ATTRACTION ***

The Secret by Rhonda Byrne (both the book and the movie) is great at explaining the basics of successful magic in anyone's life, referring to it as “the law of attraction.” However, the one shortcoming several writers have pointed out about her work is that more emphasis is needed on how important it is to take physical action in your life to bring fruit from your magical efforts. It's not enough to imagine clearly what you want and then simply sit down in a comfortable chair and wait for magic to bring it to you. Magic will open all the doors between you and what you want, but it leaves it up to you to actually walk through those doors, reach out, and take hold of the coveted item!

As for me, I'm in the process of fulfilling the dream I've had since my teenage years. It's the dream of living in a van and traveling down new roads through every kind of magic the universe has to offer. That dream has been delayed for decades with family and friends telling me all the reasons my dreams are “unrealistic” and “immature,” wanting me to fulfil their dreams for them instead of being free to follow my own heart.

But that has changed now as I have realized it's the responsibility of each of us to fulfill our own dreams. Everyone will be shown a way to do so if they just look. Your next step is always in front of you where you can see it, and when you have the courage to take that step, another step will appear after it, and then another. There is no need to see all the way down the path. You only need to keep the goal in mind while taking those “next steps” as they appear.

My choice was for an older van in great running condition but with the inside seriously trashed out, bringing the price way down. I intended to totally rebuild the inside to fit my needs anyway. Then, naturally, I used some magical techniques to bring that van to me.

My first major step was to create a working mock-up of the van's interior in my bedroom, including everything from the battery-powered shower to solar panels. The second step was to actually start living in it! That way, my whole life became a “magical ritual” to attract the real van my live-in mock-up represented.

I told Bob Wells (the father of modern van life) about my bedroom van and how I was already living in it. He thought that was a great idea, then actually made a YouTube video about it with me, titled Get Ready For Van Life! How You

Can Set Up a Van in Your Bedroom!! *

That handled the inside part of getting ready, but I needed to add an outdoors part to my van-attracting “ritual.” So, I bought a three-wheel electric scooter and began riding it each morning through this densely tree-filled neighborhood, pretending I was in my real van traveling through a national forest. While doing this, I could feel the shell of the real van around me with my home and all my belongings inside right behind me, often pretending so well as to forget the full van wasn't truly around me yet!

This “magic” worked so well, a man soon offered me his van that was almost identical to the one I had cut out a picture of to help me attract it. He had recently rebuilt the transmission, put on four new tires, and replaced the engine with a rebuild from AutoZone. And yes, he had totally trashed out the inside. He had even cut the rear wall out entirely to allow larger items to be placed inside, then used the vehicle as a dump truck, hauling away anything people wanted to pay him to get rid of.

But then he got hired for a new, much higher-paying job with the stipulation that he get a new van that would impress their customers. So that's how I came into the picture! He sold his old van to me for considerably less than even the cost of the mechanical upgrades I've listed above and was happy to do so, knowing his new high-paying job would soon recover his losses.

In other words, my magical efforts worked perfectly and in great detail, bringing me exactly what I asked for.

Soon, after putting in the new floor, walls, windows, and ceiling, my mock-up van got moved right into my real van. And I am truly a “happy camper” with even a small clothes washer, spin dryer, and everything I could ever need inside.

So that's the whole story of how I worked alongside the power of magic to fulfill my longest-held dream. What more can I say before I take my new “dream home on wheels” down a new road yet to be travelled, into the magic of the future?

What I'd like to leave behind for you to think about are a couple of lines from near the start of this chapter. For to me, they seem the most important part for anyone to understand and remember.

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There is no “right way” or “wrong way” to do magic. Magic remains alive and

* https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FQM3-X2LZGI&ab_channel=CheapRVliving

well, continuing to do its own thing behind the scenes no matter how you choose to relate to it. What matters most is what you think, feel, and believe about it, as these qualities are what give magic its directions for what to create and how to perform in your life.

If you believe in it and embrace that belief, looking past the fears and mental blocks that hold most people back, magic will open doors and windows all around you, letting the songs of life flow in and through you, ready to show you all you could ever hope to see or experience, leading the way in whichever direction you choose to go.

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